Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira has nearly single-handedly written, produced, directed, and edited four feature films. Hindered by the bureaucracy of filmmaking, he has dedicated his life to teaching cinema in 5 continents and writing 41 books, which include five feature films, six novels, and 13 dramas.

Sooner than later, true artists will emerge as the sole creators of cinema. With no crews, lighting equipment, cameras, sets, actors, or editing, AI will render long-feature films from prompts provided by well-written screenplays, bringing Hollywood to your own for free and with boundless possibilities.

This seismic transformation redefines the cinematic landscape: the emergence of the auteur as the visionary behind film creation. Blending the roles of screenwriter, director, and auteur into a single entity, this shift heralds a new era where traditional filmmaking processes are obsolete. With advanced AI technology, the auteur seamlessly crafts feature-length films from inception to completion.

Gone are conventional crews, lighting equipment, cameras, sets, actors, and editing suites. In this new cinema paradigm, the auteur utilizes AI algorithms to translate meticulously crafted screenplays into immersive cinematic experiences. Every aspect of filmmaking, from conception to execution, is orchestrated by the auteur.

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AI filmmaking

Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira

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THE END OF HOLLYWOOD AND THE TRIUMPH OF AUTEUR CINEMA

HUGO NOËL SANTANDER FERREIRA

Hugo Noël Santander-Ferreira

The end of Hollywood and the Triumph of Auteur Cinema

AI filmmaking

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Think slow, act fast

Buster Keaton

Table of Contents

Introduction 11

1. The end of Hollywood and the triumph of Auteur Cinema. 15

2. Cinema and Perception 26

The Principle of Causality: The Foundation of Film Screenwriting 26
Puzzle Solving 26
Sports Competitions 27
Nightmares 27

Expanding Narrative Schemes 27
Visual and Poetic Representation in The Trial (Welles, 1962) 28

The Principle of Causality structures aesthetics and ethics 30
Ossessione (Visconti, 1943) 30
The Postman Always Rings Twice (Garnett, 1946) 32
The criminal victim or the criminal victimizer 33
The Perception of the Universal Flood in Da Vinci 34

Cinema, a Demonstration of Our Finite Being in Infinite Time 35
The Metaphysical Paradox of Infinity and Human Perception 36

Georges Méliès: Magic, Science Fiction, and 19th-Century Positivism 37
Substitution and Disappearance Effects 38
Multiple Exposure and Superimposition 38
Elaborate Scenery and Models 38
Jump Cuts and Innovative Editing 38
Glass Painting 39
Optical Tricks 39

The Kuleshov Effect and the Limitations of Causality 39

The Propagandistic Rhetoric of 20th-Century Socialist Movements 40

The Script as a Detective Puzzle According to Ionesco 41

3. Conflict is the Minimum Dramatic Unit 43

Ideal Duration of a Drama 44

Weaving Conflicts in a Two-Hour Drama 45
The Triadic Sign of Peirce and the Principle of Causality in Narrative 45
Oedipus Rex by Sophocles, the Ideal Drama 48
Analysis and Breakdown of Conflicts and Sub conflicts in Persona by Ingmar Bergman 48

The Triad, the Ideal Conflict Scheme 51
Les 400 Coups 51
Museum Cinema: Boring for Conventional Cinephiles, Beautiful for Visual Artists 54

4. Waving Conflicts in editing 57

Outcome of the conflicts 57
Closed Conflicts 57
Cryptic Conflicts 60
Open Conflicts 62

Active and Passive Conflicts ... **63**
Active Conflicts ... 63
Passive Conflicts ... 64
Closed Conflicts as Active or Passive ... 65

Scaffolding of Conflicts ... **66**
Organic Scaffolding ... 66
Iterative Scaffolding ... 72
Episodic Scaffolding ... 76
Disarticulated Scaffolding ... 79

5. Screenplay ... ***86***

Scope of Abduction in Cinema ... **89**

Deductive filmtexts ... **90**

Gozzi's 36 dramatic situations ... **99**

6. Film Genres ... ***102***

Action Genre ... **102**
Key Elements of Action Cinema ... 103

Science Fiction ... **103**
Key Elements of Science Fiction Cinema: ... 107

Comedy ... **107**

Suspense ... **109**

Westerns ... **110**

The Idea ... **111**
Dialectics of the idea ... 112
Dialectics of Chinatown (Polanski, 1974) ... 113

7. Waving Conflicts in writing the screenplay ... ***114***

How to plot conflicts, according to Chaplin ... **114**
Conflicts of A Woman of Paris (Chaplin, 1923) ... 114
Two changes of fortune at most ... 115

Characters take decisions ... **116**
Degrees of complexity of the characters ... 116
Johari window. ... 118
Salieri's personality according to the Johari window. ... 118

The Syd Field Paradigm ... **119**

The Frame ... **121**

Examples of Frames in Cinema ... **121**

The Map ... **122**
Examples of Maps in Cinema ... 122

Synopsis and scaletta ... **126**

Tips for the Screenwriting craft ... **129**

8. Acting ... ***131***

Acting according to Shakespeare ... **131**
Action tips from Shakespeare ... 132

Acting according to Molière ... **132**
Acting tips from Molière ... 134

Acting the Voice of God ... **135**

Playing Cinema ... **136**

Actors, priests of the world ... **138**

Anger and Grief Vs. Admiration and compassion ... **139**

The Emotional Partiture ... **139**

The absence of truly satirical film ... **140**

9. Direction ... ***145***

Tips for Directors from Michelangelo Antonioni's films: ... **147**

The Maternal/Paternal Figure of the Film Director ... **149**

The perils of Transferring in Film Direction ... **150**

Edgar Alan Poe, the Ideal Film Director ... **152**
Orson Welles vs. Terry Gilliam ... 153
Talent and fame ... 154

Film Directors: Roles and Responsibilities ... **155**
1. Choosing the Screenplay ... 156
2. Hiring the Crew ... 157
3. Mise-en-scène: Directing Actors' Movements and Performances ... 159
4. Supervising Art Direction ... 168
5. Mise-en-scène II: Directing crew members ... 170
6. Supervising the Editing of the Film ... 172

Reimagining Film Direction: Bridging Traditional Methods and AI Technology ... **174**

10. Ideology ... ***175***

Dialectical and rhetorical drama ... **175**

Aristotle exiled dialectical drama to the sphere of entertainment ... **177**
Medieval biblical adaptations ... 178
Philosophy versus poetry ... 179
Deductive Analysis ... 181
Philosophy defeats poetry ... 181
Evaluation of the Poets by Aristotle ... 182
Multiplicity and Contradiction in Poetry ... 183
Aristotle’s avoidance of thorny political issues ... 185
Representation of Active and Passive Conflicts ... 186
Brecht’s reaction to Aristotelian apolitical approach ... 188
Mitry’s organic and imposed symbols ... 189
Poetics of the Image-Action ... 190
The Word-Image and the Time-Image ... 191

11. Film and semiotics.....193

The Icon..... 193
Denotation and Connotation 195

The index..... 197
Chaplin, Author of the First Memorable Index 199

The Symbol..... 201
Uses of the Icon, the Index, and the Symbol..... 205
The Word-Action..... 205

12. Resourceful AI Cinema 209

Bibliography.....217

Introduction

A film scriptwriting instructor—or, as I propose to call them, a "cinetext[1]" instructor—at a certain University of California, confessed to bursting into tears when one of his young students told him that his film script would undoubtedly be produced by one of the major Hollywood studios. He then cited the statistics: out of 2,500,000 scripts written in English worldwide, Hollywood only produces between 700 and 800 films. In other words, the probability that a novice writer has of seeing their script realized is only 0.028 - 0.032%. To this, we must subtract 70% due to the fact that most scripts that are realized pass through the "filter" of dozens of recommendations, which means that if you don't know someone in a production company or a studio, your chances are only 0.0084 - 0.0096%.

Being realistic, someone who chose to be a screenwriter until 2024 had a success rate akin to that of winning the jackpot in the lottery—according to The Washington Post, the probability of someone winning the lottery once in their life by buying a ticket every month is 0.000002%.

The mentioned "filters" are to blame for us seeing so much mediocre cinema every year. There is a bureaucratic army of "script experts" who take any spooky cinetext and turn it into a vehicle for their personal agendas, whether they be gender, class, affirmative action, or progressivism, when not by the application of worn-out formulas of dramatic tension, such as including a final confrontation between protagonist and antagonist, as if cowboy movies hadn't already been repeated ad nauseam.

The auteur cinema that André Bazin would have celebrated in the works of Ford, Welles, and Hitchcock has thus been drowned by hundreds of "script experts" who, with their charlatanism, are responsible for the hundreds of bland and tasteless films that the big cinemas present to us week after week.

The good news is that this tyranny of cinematographic bureaucracy, so typical of Hollywood, has come to an end with the creation of moving images by Artificial Intelligence. This seismic transformation redefines the cinematic landscape: the emergence of the author as the visionary behind film creation. By merging the roles of scriptwriter, director, and author into a single entity, this change heralds a new era in which traditional processes of film production are obsolete. With advanced AI technology, the author creates uncensored feature films from conception to completion.

Conventional "technical experts" disappear: lighting teams, cameras, sets, actors, and editing rooms. In this new cinematographic paradigm, the author uses AI algorithms to translate meticulously crafted scripts into immersive cinematic experiences. Every aspect of film production, from conception to execution, is orchestrated by the author of

1 And I similarly propose to call "theatretext" the works of theatre, thus rescuing the lost practice of being read by the mass. It is not reasonable for the general public to renounce the reading of "dramatexts," or cinematic or theatrical texts simply to respect the academic whim of considering them inferior to prose or verse by virtue of their use of stage directions. Joyce himself had the luxury of printing a theatretext as one of the central chapters of "Ulysses."

the cinetext.

The emergence of AI-generated film sequences presents opportunities and challenges for the author. While technology streamlines production, the discerning eye and narrative instincts of the author perfect cinematic vision. AI-generated sequences serve as a canvas for the author to craft their narrative masterpiece, perfecting the expressions of each character, the nuances of their voice, until achieving the optimal result. The acting theory of emotional scoring, which I present here, will allow virtual actors to express multiple emotional changes per line, according to the precept that acting excellence is the ability to represent "as many emotions as possible in the shortest time."

In this transformative process, the author becomes the central axis, embodying cinematic innovation and artistic expression. Drawing inspiration from pioneers like Chaplin, Keaton, Ford, Gance, Scola, Buñuel, Fassbinder, and Welles, the author merges the artistic skill of scriptwriting with directing to bring their vision to life.

Theoretical foundations of cinema are under re-evaluation in this paradigm. Scriptwriting theory, directorial aesthetics, acting direction, and narrative construction converge to inform the author's creative process. This fusion empowers the cine-artist to push the boundaries of their art, creating narratives that capture the viewer's attention globally.

Creativity burns brightly when the author not only leverages studio favouritism or the dictatorial attitude that Coppola celebrated so much but also employs their full knowledge of all converging arts in cinema as cinematographic tools to captivate audiences. From character development to visual composition, every detail now exclusively reflects the author's vision. Discussions with studios, producers, and capricious stars are over, those that led Von Stroheim to reduce "Greed" from ten hours to just two. The arrogance of producers or the envy of directors who are not also actors was also responsible for "The Magnificent Ambersons," directed by Orson Welles, suffering significant cuts by the studio; after Welles delivered a version of the film of approximately 148 minutes, RKO Pictures edited it without his participation, reducing it to a mere 88 minutes and significantly altering its structure and content.

The rise of the author signals a paradigm shift, where individual creativity prevails. As the lines blur between screenwriter, director, and author, a new archetype of storytelling emerges. The author embodies artistic autonomy and creativity, shaping narratives that reach the peaks of Shakespeare, Chekhov, or Ibsen in the seventh art.

The false rhetoric of "collective creation," the origin of so many dull films, fades in the face of individual brilliance, despite political agendas attacking great artists precisely for being individual geniuses. The lampreys of whales or the drones of the hive are discovered by AI and must now work for their livelihood.

In the era of AI, the author's possibilities are limitless, imbuing the future of cinema with an intensity only found in the Dionysian festivities of ancient Greece. As architects of their cinematic universe, authors embody artistic autonomy, shaping a new era of films that only bore the soulless or ignorant.

Pioneers like Dreyer and Pasolini are rescued as dusty masters in this book, shaping our understanding of the human experience. We present here the secrets of auteur cinema, the essence of cinematographic and dramatic work, its religious or

metaphysical roots, to those who want to learn it. The only condition, dear student, is that you discard everything that the film bureaucracy has taught you.

As the ancients used to say: "Monere, non punire, ignoratian decet." It is not convenient to punish, but to advise ignorance.

Freed from the restrictions of scriptwriting academic bureaucracy and investors, true censors of each film, authors will finally be able to expose their sensitive vision of the world.

Through chapters that synthesize my teaching experience in film on five continents, this book starts from a gnoseological analysis of aesthetics and perception, celebrating the metaphysical potential of cinema, the other face of Janus, that of dreams, intuitions, eternity. We honour visionary pioneers who built cinematic storytelling, Truffaut and Hitchcock, their innovation in an era that was testing the possibilities of this new art.

We also underline the ascent of film script, akin to the theatre text and the novel, if not poetry. Films like "The Seventh Seal," "Belle de Jour," "The Adventures of Iron Pussy," and "Amélie" transcend borders. Cinema inspires introspection, challenging social prejudices, opening perspectives, and provoking ethical changes in the laws of nations.

Here, cinema reigns as the supreme art, capable of delivering a mirror to the world, its synthesis, whether it be worse than reality (comedy), just as reality (drama, documentary), and as it should be (tragedy). As we enter a new cinematic era, let us embrace change, guided by the unlimited horizons that only genuine artists deliver.

Hugo Noel Santander Ferreira
May 11th, 2024
SDG

1. The end of Hollywood and the triumph of Auteur Cinema.

In 2006, amid the buzzing anticipation of technological advancements, I stood before the commission of teachers and film directors of the Colombian Ministry of Culture and dared to predict the advent of the digital age in filmmaking. My words were met with scoffs and disbelief, particularly from a director renowned for her opulent budgets. However, I remained steadfast in my belief and emphasized the importance of nurturing a love for the dramatic legacy of theatre, film scripts, creativity, imagination, literature, and philosophy. While many leaned towards the allure of technique, expensive lighting equipment, and cutting-edge cameras, I advocated for a deeper connection to the essence of storytelling and artistic expression. My views, however, were met with animosity from some of my colleagues at the time. They insisted on the primacy of photography in filmmaking, dismissing my vision as idealistic and impractical.

Undeterred by the scepticism around me, I chose to focus my efforts on the study of languages, philosophy, and the art of writing. For decades, I immersed myself in the richness of several cultures and languages, delving deep into the philosophical underpinnings of storytelling and narrative construction.

With the emergence of AI-generated film sequences, the landscape of cinematography has undergone an abrupt transformation. The traditional notions of filmmaking, once dominated by big budgets and elaborate productions, have given way to a new paradigm where knowledge and words reign supreme. Image sequence generators such as VEED represents the culmination of my vision, where the craft of filmmaking is stripped down to its core elements: the power of storytelling, the mastery of waving conflicts, and the boundless creativity of the human imagination. It is a testament to the enduring significance of artistry in the digital age, and a reminder that true innovation stems not from technology alone, but from the relentless pursuit of excellence in narrative craft and semiotic representation.

As the era of Hollywood extravagance fades into the annals of history, a new era of one-man-studio filmmaking emerges, fuelled by the passion and dedication of authors who dare to defy convention and embrace the transformative power of words.

In envisioning the future of filmmaking, it is clear that technology will continue to play a pivotal role in reshaping the landscape of the industry. With advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning, we are on the cusp of a revolution where the traditional barriers to entry in filmmaking will be dismantled. No longer will filmmakers be beholden to the whims of producers or the constraints of bureaucracy. Instead, the power to create compelling cinematic experiences will be democratized, placed squarely in the hands of storytellers and visionaries.

The emergence of software capable of transforming screenplays into full-length movies marks a paradigm shift in the way films are produced and consumed. Gone are the days of arduous negotiations with studios and the endless red tape of pre-production. Instead, filmmakers will have direct access to the tools and resources needed to bring their visions to life, unencumbered by external pressures or commercial interests.

This democratization of filmmaking holds profound implications for both creators

and audiences alike. For creators, it represents an unprecedented opportunity to express themselves authentically and without compromise. Freed from the constraints of traditional financing models, they can explore bold ideas, experiment with new techniques, and push the boundaries of cinematic storytelling in ways never before possible.

For audiences, this shift promises a more diverse and dynamic array of cinematic experiences. No longer bound by the limited perspectives of mainstream studios, viewers will have access to a wealth of independent voices and perspectives, each offering a unique window into the human experience. From intimate character studies to epic adventures, the possibilities are as limitless as the imaginations of the storytellers themselves.

In terms of marketing, this new era of filmmaking will require a reimagining of traditional strategies. With a flood of content entering the market, the challenge will be to cut through the noise and capture the attention of audiences inundated with choices. Personalization and targeting will become paramount, as filmmakers leverage data analytics and AI-driven insights to tailor their messages to specific audience segments.

Moreover, the rise of social media and digital platforms will empower filmmakers to connect directly with their audiences, bypassing traditional distribution channels and forging more direct, more meaningful relationships with spectators. Crowdfunding and community engagement initiatives will enable filmmakers to not only finance their projects but also cultivate a dedicated following eager to support their creative endeavours.

In essence, the future of filmmaking lies not in the hands of a select few, but in the collective creativity of a global community of storytellers. With technology as their ally and imagination as their guide, they will chart a bold new course for cinema, one defined by innovation, diversity, and above all, a deep and abiding passion for the art of storytelling.

The concept of Auteur cinema, originating from French film theory in the mid-20th century, revolutionized the way we perceive filmmaking. François Truffaut and André Bazin, among other French film critics and theorists, played pivotal roles in shaping the concept of Auteur cinema. Truffaut's writings, particularly his influential essay '*Une certaine tendance du cinéma français*' (A Certain Tendency in French Cinema), and Bazin's emphasis on directorial style and authorship (Bazin, 1967) greatly contributed to the development and popularization of the Auteur theory, by proposing that the director is the primary creative force behind a film, akin to the author of a literary work[2].

This theory elevated directors to the status of artists, asserting their unique vision and personal style as the driving forces behind their films. At its core, Auteur cinema celebrates the individuality and artistic integrity of filmmakers. Directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, Federico Fellini, and Ingmar Bergman became synonymous with their distinctive cinematic signatures, imbuing their works with thematic depth, visual flair, and philosophical inquiry. Their films were not merely commercial products but

2 See Bazin, A. (1967). What Is Cinema? University of California Press.

expressions of their creative personas, reflecting their personal obsessions, worldview, and aesthetic sensibilities.

The rise of Auteur cinema challenged the prevailing studio system, which often prioritized commercial considerations over artistic merit. Directors sought greater autonomy and creative control, pushing the boundaries of cinematic expression and blurring the lines between art and entertainment. Auteur filmmakers embraced experimentation, innovation, and risk-taking, rejecting formulaic storytelling in favour of bold, idiosyncratic visions.

Erich von Stroheim's *Greed* (1924) is a legendary tale in the history of cinema, not only for its artistic ambition but also for the tumultuous journey it underwent during its production and editing process. Von Stroheim, known for his uncompromising dedication to realism and detail, embarked on the ambitious project to adapt Frank Norris's novel "McTeague" into a film.

The initial cut of *Greed* was an astonishing ten hours long, a sprawling epic that aimed to capture the complexities of human nature and the destructive power of greed. Von Stroheim's vision was grandiose, intending to explore the lives of the characters in intricate detail, leaving no aspect of their existence unexamined.

However, the length of the film proved to be a significant challenge for both artistic and commercial reasons. Studios were hesitant to release such a lengthy film, fearing that it would not attract audiences and would be financially unsustainable. Additionally, the practicality of screening a ten-hour film presented logistical hurdles for theatres.

Despite von Stroheim's insistence on the integrity of his vision, pressure mounted to condense the film to a more manageable length. Studios, led by executives at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), demanded drastic cuts to reduce the runtime.

Reluctantly, von Stroheim began the arduous task of editing his masterpiece. Scene by scene, he trimmed and excised footage, sacrificing subplots, character development, and nuance in the process. The editing process was not only a practical necessity but also a painful compromise for von Stroheim, who saw his meticulous work distilled into a fraction of its original length.

Ultimately, " *Greed* was reduced to a mere two hours—a shadow of its former self. The film's epic scope was truncated, leaving behind a condensed narrative that failed to fully capture von Stroheim's artistic vision.

The experience of editing *Greed* from ten hours to two stands as a testament to the tensions between artistic expression and commercial viability in the film industry. Von Stroheim's struggle reflects the perennial challenge faced by filmmakers navigating the competing demands of art and commerce.

The Magnificent Ambersons (1942), directed by Orson Welles, is another poignant example of studio interference altering the artistic vision of a filmmaker. Orson Welles, already renowned for his ground-breaking work on "Citizen Kane," set out to adapt Booth Tarkington's novel *The Magnificent Ambersons* for the screen.

Welles envisioned a richly textured exploration of societal change and the decline of aristocratic families in early 20th-century America. His initial cut of the film ran approximately 148 minutes—an ambitious and meticulously crafted work that delved into the complexities of its characters and themes.

Despite Welles's stature in the industry, the studio, RKO Pictures, intervened in the editing process. Motivated by concerns over the film's commercial viability and audience appeal, RKO executives took the drastic step of editing the film without Welles's input.

In the shadowed corridors of RKO Pictures, a clash of creative wills unfolded, threatening to mar the genius of Orson Welles's vision for *The Magnificent Ambersons.* At the helm stood George Schaefer, a titan of authority, wielding the power to decree the fate of Welles's opus. Alongside him, Jack Moss, a producer ensnared in the tumult, his hand guiding the film's fate with a heavy touch devoid of Welles's guiding genius.

Yet, amidst the chaos, another figure emerged: Robert Wise, tasked with the solemn duty of shepherding Welles's creation in his absence. While not the antagonist, Wise became the reluctant arbiter of the film's destiny, his scissors slicing away at Welles's meticulously crafted tapestry under the watchful eye of RKO's executives.

Together, they formed a triumvirate of opposition, their actions etching scars upon the cinematic canvas of *The Magnificent Ambersons*. Their decisions, fuelled by ego and the narrow lens of commercial interest, severed the tether between Welles's vision and its realization, leaving behind a fractured masterpiece haunted by the spectre of what might have been.

The result was a heavily truncated version of *The Magnificent Ambersons*, reduced to a mere 88 minutes. This drastic editing process significantly altered the film's structure, pacing, and narrative coherence, stripping away essential elements of Welles's original vision.

The arrogance of the producers and their belief that they knew better than the filmmaker, coupled with the envy of directors who lacked Welles's autonomy and creative control, ultimately led to the mutilation of *The Magnificent Ambersons*. Welles, powerless to prevent the studio's interference, witnessed his meticulously crafted film reduced to a fraction of its intended length.

The fate of *The Magnificent Ambersons* serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of studio interference in the creative process and the enduring struggle for artistic control in the film industry. Despite Welles's efforts to resist the studio's meddling, the final cut of the film bore little resemblance to his original vision, leaving audiences and critics to lament the lost potential of what could have been a cinematic masterpiece.

As Auteur cinema gained traction, it inspired a new generation of filmmakers to explore the medium as a vehicle for personal expression and social commentary. The French New Wave, characterized by its emphasis on naturalistic performances, unconventional narrative structures, and location shooting, epitomized the spirit of Auteurism. Filmmakers like Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut, and Éric Rohmer challenged cinematic conventions, reinventing the language of cinema and redefining the role of the director in the filmmaking process.

Fast forward to the present day, and we find ourselves on the brink of another paradigm shift in filmmaking, driven by advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning. The emergence of AI-powered filmmaking tools promises to democratize the creative process, offering filmmakers unprecedented freedom and flexibility in bringing their visions to life.

In the realm of AI cinema making, the principles of Auteurism remain as relevant as ever. While technology may facilitate the production process, it is ultimately the director's vision that guides the creative endeavour. AI tools can assist directors in generating ideas, streamlining production workflows, and enhancing visual effects, but they cannot replace the human touch or intuition that defines Auteur cinema.

This book is primarily a manual for creating auteur films. I have translated the complexities of academic research into common language. Throughout these pages, I also refute many clichés and prejudices that academics and pseudo-filmmakers have imported into film theory. I call false filmmakers all those screenwriting gurus or film professors who claim to know all the secrets of cinema without ever having directed a full-length film. You find them at film festivals and film schools, looking to train a distracted producer who will hire them as censors for their companies. As I once mentioned at an academic meeting, they are responsible for the large influx of boring cinema. I have dedicated a chapter of this book to uncovering the false cinematographic garb of boring cinema, which I more correctly call cinema for museum screening.

Furthermore, AI-driven cinema presents exciting opportunities for collaboration and experimentation. Directors can harness the power of AI algorithms to analyse dramatic influences from previous playwrights and filmmakers, tailoring their storytelling techniques accordingly. By leveraging the wealth of dramatic writing from the past 2,550 years, filmmakers can craft more resonant narratives, engage audiences on a deeper level, and spark meaningful conversations about the human condition.

As we embrace the possibilities of AI cinema, we must also grapple with its ethical and artistic implications. While AI algorithms can optimize certain aspects of filmmaking, they also raise concerns about creativity, authorship, and cultural authenticity. As filmmakers navigate this new terrain, they must remain vigilant in preserving the integrity and authenticity of their artistic vision, even as they embrace the transformative potential of AI technology.

The evolution of Auteur cinema from its origins in French film theory to the era of modern AI cinema reflects a fundamental shift in our understanding of filmmaking as both an art form and a technological medium. While the tools and techniques may change, the spirit of Auteurism endures, reminding us of the enduring power of human creativity and imagination in shaping the cinematic landscape.

Sergei Eisenstein, a pioneering Soviet filmmaker and theorist, made significant contributions to the art of cinema through his ground-breaking theories and innovative filmmaking techniques. Eisenstein's approach to filmmaking was deeply influenced by his study of various disciplines, including art, literature, psychology, and philosophy. One of the central themes in Eisenstein's work was the exploration of dialectical montage, a concept rooted in Marxist philosophy and the Hegelian dialectic.

Eisenstein's theory of montage emphasized the juxtaposition of images to create intellectual and emotional connections in the mind of the viewer. Drawing inspiration from the writings of Leonardo da Vinci and other Renaissance thinkers, Eisenstein saw parallels between the principles of montage and the concept of the Universal Deluge, a metaphor for the flood of sensory impressions that bombard the human mind.

In Eisenstein's view, cinema had the potential to harness the power of montage to

transcend the limitations of language and convey complex ideas and emotions directly to the audience. He believed that by manipulating the sequence and rhythm of images, filmmakers could evoke profound psychological responses and stimulate intellectual engagement.

Eisenstein's theories on montage were closely intertwined with his belief in the transformative potential of cinema as a revolutionary art form. He saw filmmaking as a means of challenging conventional modes of perception and inciting social change. Eisenstein's films, such as *Battleship Potemkin* and *October*, employed montage techniques to depict historical events and political struggles with visceral intensity and ideological fervour.

Like Leonardo's notebooks, which explored the complexities of the natural world and the human psyche, Eisenstein's films sought to reduce class struggle and the rise of the dictatorship of the proletariat to a series of emotions that were a consequence of external events, uncontrollable for the people. There, the fury of God against an impious humanity; here, the fury of Lenin against the leadership of Russia by the Tsar and his bureaucrats, with an allusion to the Tsarina manipulated by the church incarnated in the monk Rasputin.

The concepts of AI filmmaking can be related to Gilles Deleuze's volumes on cinema, particularly in *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, as they explore the nature of cinematic time, movement, and perception. Although Deleuze's works primarily focus on cinema and its philosophical implications, we can draw parallels between his ideas and the potential of AI in filmmaking.

Deleuze's exploration of cinema as a medium for the representation of time and movement aligns with AI's capabilities to analyse vast amounts of data and generate sequences of pursuits typical of action films, or movement-images, and surreal or non-realistic scenarios, characteristic of the time-image.

In *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, Deleuze discusses the concept of the movement-image, emphasizing the importance of action and movement in shaping narrative and visual storytelling. Heated discussions, brawls, life-and-death pursuits, duels, and explosions are typical of the movement-image, the heritage of filmmakers like Fritz Lang, John Ford, John Huston, Sergio Leone, Alfred Hitchcock, Henri-Georges Clouzot, Martin Scorsese, Tim Burton, and Clint Eastwood, which consists of the externalization of violent, primarily masculine, emotions.

The concept of the time-image delves into the fragmentation and manipulation of temporal perception in cinema, through infirm feelings such as doubt, fear, insecurity, shyness, discouragement, indolence, and madness. Deleuze discusses how filmmakers like Carl Theodor Dreyer, Luis Buñuel, Joseph Losey, and Alain Resnais challenge traditional notions of time and causality through their innovative approaches to narrative structure and editing techniques. This approach, often rejected by the masses accustomed to the movement-image, can take on new perspectives and developments under the umbrella of AI cinema.

AI cinema has the potential to emulate the experimental by analysing the introspective dynamics of films and generating sequences that disrupt conventional space-time logic. For example, AI algorithms can manipulate the sequencing of scenes,

introduce non-linear narratives, and explore alternative perceptions of time and reality, mimicking the experimental imagery or introspective dialogues of films like *Un Chien Andalou* (Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, 1929) or *Gertrud* (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1964).

In films like *Last Year at Marienbad* (Alain Resnais, 1961) or *Les Carabiniers* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1963), temporal ambiguity and narrative complexity play crucial roles in shaping the viewer's experience. AI cinema can draw inspiration from these works to create immersive cinematic experiences that challenge traditional storytelling conventions and expand the boundaries of narrative possibility.

Overall, the concepts explored by Deleuze in his volumes on cinema provide a reference framework for applying AI's potential in reshaping the landscape of filmmaking. By embracing not only the principles of the movement-image and the time-image but also the affection-image and the word-image, AI systems can contribute to the evolution of cinema as a dynamic and transformative art form, encouraging creativity and expression in the digital age.

The affection-image, exemplified in *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1928), focuses on the representation of pure emotions, capturing facial expressions and minimal gestures to convey complex internal states. AI can analyse and replicate these emotional nuances to create deeper and more authentic characters in cinema.

The word-image, on the other hand, is the fusion of dialogues and internal monologues with the visual narrative, as seen in *Persona* (Ingmar Bergman, 1966). AI algorithms can generate introspective dialogues and develop plots that explore characters' psychology in greater detail.

Heraclitus reminds us that nothing comes from a void. A child comes from a man and a woman, just as spring comes from warmth and cold. AI is based on this principle, but it requires a scribe to guide its algorithms in the right direction.

Just as in Hollywood it is legendary that the winner of a million-dollar pitch only had to say "Home Alone set in the Middle Ages," the best AI sequences will have to follow detailed commands. For example, "write a dialogue in which two lovers end their relationship, inspired by *Scenes from a Marriage* (Ingmar Bergman, 1973), and set it on an interstellar ship pursued by alien forces, emulating the chase scene from *Stagecoach* (John Ford, 1939)."

To develop this idea, first, the AI analyses the emotional and psychological dynamics of the dialogue in *Scenes from a Marriage*. This film by Bergman, recognized for its depth in exploring human relationships, provides the emotional and script foundation necessary for the AI. Then, the AI adds, according to the author's instructions, elements such as the tension and action present in the chase sequence from *Stagecoach*, a masterpiece of action cinema directed by John Ford.

This process not only involves the analysis of narrative and dialogue patterns but also the AI's ability to recreate memorable environments and emotions. By receiving clear and precise instructions, the AI generates content that blends the emotional with the spectacular, giving birth to new forms of cinematic storytelling that combine the best of two worlds never before confronted.

AI cinema analyses algorithms to recognize patterns of action and movement in existing films, allowing the generation of new sequences that adhere to the principles

outlined by the author of the emerging film. By appropriating the theories of cinema and the rich legacy of dramaturgy, visual arts, and literature, AI systems find an expedited way to generate new amalgams of compositions and styles that evoke different sensations and emotions that surpass traditional cinema. "I am not a giant," Bernard Shaw used to say when questioned about the originality of his plays, “but a pygmy standing on the shoulders of giants.”

The concept of semiotics in cinema, as explored by theorists like Christian Metz and Umberto Eco, focuses on the study of signs, symbols, and meanings in film. My chapter on the semiotics of cinema challenges passive interpretations of signs to postulate a dynamic approach. By offering young filmmakers the use of various semiotic elements—icons, such as images; indexes, including sounds and shadows; and symbols, like words— auteurs have a diverse array of possibilities to communicate their sensitive ideas. Our approach to semiotics in cinema involves not only analysing how visual and auditory elements convey messages and evoke emotions but also understanding how these elements communicate ideas that shape the viewer's perception and interpretation of a film.

When considering AI cinema, semiotics will play a significant role in how artificial intelligence systems interpret and generate appropriate signs for cinematic content. AI algorithms can be programmed to recognize and analyse visual and auditory cues within films, identifying patterns and semiotic codes that contribute to storytelling and meaning-making.

The application of semiotics in cinema to AI filmmaking involves the analysis, interpretation, and generation of cinematic content through the lens of signs, symbols, and meaning. By leveraging AI technologies such as image recognition, audio analysis, narrative generation, and audience feedback, filmmakers can harness the power of semiotics to create compelling and resonant cinematic experiences in the digital age.

1. **Image Recognition and Analysis:** AI systems equipped with image recognition technology can analyse visual elements in films, such as characters, objects, settings, and visual motifs. By identifying recurring visual patterns and symbols, AI algorithms can interpret the semiotic significance of these elements and their contribution to the narrative structure and themes of the film.
2. **Audio Analysis and Sound Design:** Semiotics in cinema extends to the analysis of sound and music as symbolic elements that convey mood, emotion, and meaning. AI algorithms can analyse audio tracks in films, identifying auditory cues, musical motifs, and sound effects that contribute to the film's semiotic language. This analysis can inform the generation of original soundtracks or the selection of pre-existing music that aligns with the desired emotional and thematic tone of the film.
3. **Narrative Structure and Symbolism:** Semiotics also encompasses the study of narrative structure, symbolism, and metaphor in cinema. AI systems can analyse the narrative arcs, plot devices, and symbolic imagery present in films, identifying recurring motifs and themes that contribute to the film's overall meaning. By understanding the semiotic underpinnings of cinematic storytelling, AI algorithms can generate narratives and visual compositions that resonate with audiences on a deep emotional and intellectual level.
4. **Audience Reception and Interpretation:** Semiotics in cinema also considers how audiences perceive and interpret the signs and symbols present in films. AI systems can analyse audience reactions and engagement metrics to gauge the effectiveness of semiotic elements in conveying intended messages and eliciting emotional responses. This feedback loop will be checked by AI filmmakers, following the Shakespearean precept that quality is superior to quantity: “Though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o’erweigh a whole theatre of others.”

The concept of suppressing crews, scenarios, actors, and editing in AI cinema brings several potential advantages to the filmmaking process:

1. **Cost Efficiency:** Eliminating the need for traditional crews, physical scenarios, and human actors can significantly reduce production costs. AI-driven filmmaking can streamline the entire production process, minimizing expenses associated with hiring personnel, constructing sets, and managing on-set logistics.
2. **Time Savings:** AI cinema has the potential to accelerate the filmmaking timeline by automating various production tasks. Without the need for extensive pre-production planning, on-set rehearsals, or post-production editing, filmmakers can produce content more efficiently and meet tighter deadlines.
3. **Flexibility and Adaptability:** AI cinema allows filmmakers to experiment with different storytelling formats, visual styles, and narrative structures without the constraints of traditional production methods. AI algorithms can adapt to changing creative demands and iterate rapidly to explore new artistic possibilities.
4. **Access to New Talent and Ideas:** AI-driven filmmaking democratizes the creative process by providing opportunities for emerging filmmakers, writers, and artists to contribute to the cinematic landscape. With AI tools and platforms, aspiring filmmakers can collaborate virtually, share ideas, and access resources that were previously inaccessible.
5. **Recovering Storytelling Techniques:** By diving into thousands of classical theatre plays, AI can enrich modern storytelling techniques. AI technology enables filmmakers to explore forgotten and yet valuable theatre plays and novels that transcend traditional cinematic conventions. By analysing short stories and plays that have not been applauded by critics and academics, AI can present the forgotten treasures of storytelling to the auteur’s creativity. Rescuing texts without regard to fame, filmmakers can push the boundaries of visual storytelling and create innovative cinematic experiences that captivate audiences and rekindle their interest in the history of dramatic arts.
6. **Scalability and Reproducibility:** AI-driven filmmaking offers scalability and reproducibility, enabling filmmakers to produce high-quality content at scale. With AI-generated scenarios, characters, and visual effects, filmmakers can replicate successful formulas and adapt content for different audiences and distribution channels.
7. **Enhanced Personalization:** AI algorithms can analyse unexplored themes, viewing habits, and demographic literature that is not yet worldwide known to make the

cinematic experience global. By translating from all languages to English as the lingua franca, filmmakers can present more engaging and immersive narratives that resonate with audiences longing for diversity and inclusiveness.

Overall, the advantages of suppressing crews, scenarios, actors, and editing in AI cinema lie in its ability to revolutionize the filmmaking process, empower storytellers, and incorporate centuries of dramatic literature into their creativity, all feasible with the possibilities of the digital age.

In the era of AI-driven filmmaking, while traditional elements like crews, scenarios, actors, and editing may become less essential, certain foundational components remain crucial for creating compelling films:

1. **Creative Vision:** Despite the advancements in AI technology, the creative vision of the filmmaker remains paramount. It is essential for crafting memorable cinematic experiences that filmmakers possess the ability to conceptualize, develop, and execute coherent narratives that resonate with audiences.
2. **Storytelling Skills:** Effective storytelling lies at the heart of filmmaking. Filmmakers need to master the art of crafting engaging narratives, developing multidimensional characters, and structuring plotlines to captivate and entertain viewers.
3. **Understanding of Human Emotions and Behaviour:** While AI algorithms can analyse data and simulate human-like behaviour, understanding genuine human emotions and behaviour is crucial for creating authentic and relatable characters and narratives. Our chapter on acting will present to the young director the conceptual tools to present a compelling performance from their characters, in order to impact spectators with impressive emotions.
4. **Technical Proficiency:** While AI tools can automate certain aspects of filmmaking, filmmakers still need a strong foundation in technical skills related to cinematography, sound design, lighting, and visual effects to execute their creative vision effectively. In our chapter on film direction, we tackle its creative conception.
5. **Adaptability and Innovation:** As AI technology continues to evolve, filmmakers must remain adaptable and embrace innovation to stay ahead of the curve. Being open to exploring new techniques, tools, and storytelling approaches can lead to ground-breaking cinematic achievements.
6. **Ethical Considerations:** As AI technology becomes more integrated into the filmmaking process, filmmakers must grapple with ethical considerations related to privacy, consent, bias, and the potential impact of AI-generated content on society and culture.

While AI has the potential to revolutionize certain aspects of filmmaking, it is ultimately the combination of human creativity, storytelling prowess, technical expertise, the legacy of theatre, and ethical awareness that distinguishes truly exceptional filmmaking in the era of AI.

Let's begin our immersion in cinematography by unravelling the epistemological

imperatives of narrative, that is, of the theatertext, cinetext or film script, which is an offshoot from the a-priori principle of causality.

2. Cinema and Perception

The Principle of Causality: The Foundation of Film Screenwriting

The unreliable relationship between cause and effect forms the cornerstone of human perception. I hear a high-pitched voice calling me, and when I turn around, I expect to see a woman; two separate events that my mind unifies to establish a third meaning: a woman has called me.

> "'It's sufficient to observe, that there is no relation, which produces a stronger connexion in the fancy, and makes one idea more readily recall another, than the relation of cause and effect betwixt their objects[3].''

However, I have the right to wonder if the voice calling me belongs to a transgender person who will be offended if identified as binary, or if it is indeed the woman I identify primarily by the tone of her voice. Such reasonable doubt is only confirmed or dispelled with certainty when I see her before me.

As perceptual entities, we are subject to continuous error due to ever-changing social referents.

The scene we just described is a narrative.

A narrative is a way of organizing and presenting events, real or imagined, in a sequence that is perceived as meaningful.

This organization is also based on the principle of causality, where each event or action in the story has a cause and a consequence.

This principle is fundamental to creating a coherent and comprehensible structure in the narrative.

Our attraction to narratives is partly due to our tendency to identify causes and consequences and recreate unspoken conflicts.

This identification is evident in various contexts:

Puzzle Solving

Imagine a 1000-piece puzzle depicting a complex scene of a medieval market. As you progress, you find pieces that resemble fragments of buildings and characters. The conflict arises when, after assembling a significant part of the edge, you discover that some pieces seem not to fit where you expected. This tension intensifies when, despite your best efforts, a set of central pieces appears completely out of place.

The tension in this case comes from the search for order in chaos. The human mind craves patterns and coherence, and the inability to find a suitable place for each piece generates frustration. The principle of causality manifests here in the need to understand how each piece relates to the whole, and the interruption of this process creates a sense

3 Hume, D. (1739-1740). A Treatise of Human Nature. I, 1,4.

of discomfort and challenge.

Sports Competitions

Now recreate a soccer match in the final of the World Cup. The favourite team is losing 1-0 in the last 10 minutes of the game. The tension increases as the underdog team performs a series of brilliant defensive moves, frustrating every attempt by the opposing team to score a goal. Finally, in the 89th minute, a controversial foul leads to a free kick that could change the outcome of the match.

In sports competitions, tension arises from the uncertainty of the result and the emotional investment in the unfolding events. Every action on the field has immediate and potential consequences for the game's outcome. Spectators are deeply involved because every pass, shot, and strategic move has the power to alter the course of the game, exemplifying the principle of causality in action; you thus know that a free kick is more likely the cause of the goal you long for.

Nightmares

All nightmares arise from our deep-seated fear of death.

It is the will to survive that places us in a nightmare where you are running through a dark maze, pursued by the Minotaur of Crete. Each time you think you have found an exit, you find yourself back at the starting point, while the Minotaur gets closer and closer. The tension increases with each failed attempt to escape, until you are finally cornered with no way out.

Nightmares generate tension by playing with fear and anxiety, using an internal logic of cause and effect that seems inescapable. The mind creates a scenario where every attempt at resolution (escaping the maze) results in failure, intensifying the sense of despair and vulnerability. The perception of an imminent danger that inevitably approaches highlights the importance of each decision and movement, demonstrating how causality structures even our most terrifying dreams.

It is also the principle of causality that allows us to establish that, when cornered, we have only two options: to flee or fight. This nightmare will end when, embodying the figure of Theseus or Icarus, we either escape flying or face the Minotaur without fear of perishing.

These examples show how narrative relies on causality to generate tension and maintain our interest. Understanding cause-effect relationships is crucial for conflict resolution, reflecting our innate need to find meaning and order in our experiences, whether in games, sports, or dreams.

Expanding Narrative Schemes

The concept of dialectics in narrative, highlighted by Longinus (1 BC) in "On the Sublime," emphasized the dialectical value of narrative and, contrary to Aristotle, gave more importance to the word than to the plot and diction. His argument, which we will revisit in the analysis of word-image, is that the dramatic text arises from the images the poet creates in his imagination, and it is these images that evoke emotions in the spectator, not exclusively the climax associated with catharsis (Longinus, 1979, p. 83):

"Images, moreover, contribute greatly, my young friend, to dignity, elevation, and power as a pleader. In this sense some call them mental representations. In a general way the name of image or imagination is applied to every idea of the mind, in whatever form it presents itself, which gives birth to speech[4]."

Longinus thus indicates that tragedy does not represent a single conflict but many, and that even a monologue can represent a complete conflict in a verse. Suffice it to cite the entry of the god Dionysus into the palace of Lycurgus, which Longinus cites by rescuing a memorable verse from Aeschylus' lost tragedies:

A frenzy shakes the hall; the roofs are bacchants.

Sir Philip Sidney, in his "Defence of Poesie," suggests that poetry is superior to philosophy because poetry has the particular ability to illuminate abstract concepts with the richness of its literary figures, making them accessible to any reader or listener:

"[The philosopher] fills the memory with many infallible grounds of wisdom, which, nevertheless, lie dark before the imaginative and judging power if they be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of poesie" (Sidney, 1586).

The soliloquy of Hamlet "To be or not to be" deeply explores the question of existence, suffering, and resilience in the face of adversity. This monologue raises a fundamental question about why anyone would endure such suffering instead of ending it through death.

Visual and Poetic Representation in The Trial (Welles, 1962)

Orson Welles, in his cinematic adaptation of *The Trial* by Franz Kafka, uses powerful visual images to capture the essence of Josef K.'s existential struggle. The sequences of the film, with their oppressive shadows, labyrinthine structures, and scenes of bureaucratic anguish, vividly illustrate the sufferings that Hamlet describes.

Hamlet: For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make

4 Longinus. (1979). Longinus on the sublime: The Greek text (A. S. Way, Trans.). New York, NY: AMS Press. (Original work published ca. 1st century).

With a bare bodkin?

Josef K., played by Anthony Perkins, walks through the endless dark corridors of the court. Each door he opens reveals a new bureaucratic barrier, each face he encounters reflects a new mockery. The shadows of oppressive bureaucracy envelop him, symbolizing the "law's delay" and the "insolence of office." K.'s determination to continue, despite constant humiliations and the absurd lack of justice, reflects his resilience in the face of adversity.

"On entering he almost stumbled, for behind the door there was an extra step. "They don't show much consideration for the public," he said. "'They show no consideration of any kind," replied the usher. "Just look at this waiting-room." It was a long passage, a lobby communicating by ill-fitting doors with the different offices on the floor. Although there was no window to admit light, it was not entirely dark, for some of the offices were not properly boarded off from the passage but had an open frontage of wooden rails, reaching, however, to the roof, through which a little light penetrated and through which one could see a few officials as well, some writing at their desks, and some standing close to the rails peering through the interstices at the people in the lobby[5]."

Hamlet questions why someone would choose to endure continuous suffering instead of seeking the relief of death. In *The Trial*, Josef K., although trapped in an apparently hopeless struggle, continues to face his fate, refusing to be defeated by oppressive circumstances.

The tension in both cases comes from the confrontation with oppressive forces and the decision to resist despite the pain. For Hamlet, doubt and the contemplation of the future bureaucratic struggles a king should face create a profound existential crisis. For Josef K., the democratic bureaucracy and systematic injustice of the 20th century represent a constant struggle to maintain his identity and sense of being.

In *The Trial*, Welles makes K. a rebel hero who understands that the struggles of life are what make each life worthy. His understanding of such reality becomes naturalistic, as he is trapped in a maze from which he knows he won't escape until death.

At the end of Kafka's "The Trial," Josef K. is taken away by two men on the eve of his thirty-first birthday. They lead him to a quarry outside the city, where they intend to execute him. Unlike in Welles's film, Josef K. does not blow himself up or laugh at the absurdity of his situation. Instead, he is filled with a sense of helplessness and resignation. The two men argue about how to proceed with the execution, but eventually, they pin Josef K. down and one of them stabs him in the heart with a butcher's knife. Josef K.'s final words reflect his complete despair and lack of understanding of the situation:

"Like a dog!" he says, as if the shame of it must outlive him.

Shakespeare's narrative and Welles's cinematic interpretation, although separated

5 Kafka, Franz (1964). The Trial. The Modern Library., p. 78.

by centuries and cultural contexts, converge in exploring human resilience in the face of oppression and suffering. While Hamlet reflects on the possibility of non-existence as an escape from pain, Josef K. embodies the determination to continue existing and fighting until fortune allows it.

The Principle of Causality structures aesthetics and ethics

The categories of Aesthetics represent abstractions with sensual references. Viewers perceive beauty through their senses, directly experiencing the sensory qualities of a work, such as its colour, shape, sound, and texture. These sensory experiences are immediate and personal, providing a direct connection to the artwork.

In contrast, the categories of Aesthetics appeal to the intellect. These categories are general abstractions, concepts like the sublime, the grotesque, the beautiful, the tragic, etc., which cannot be strictly defined within the limits of particular logic. These categories require a level of intellectual reflection and analysis that goes beyond immediate sensory perception. Viewers must interpret and contextualize these categories within a broader conceptual framework to fully understand their meaning and application.

All research on ethics should consider the application of general concepts to particular circumstances. Ethics, like aesthetics, involves the abstraction of general principles that must then be applied to specific situations. This process of synthesis must be placed beyond the mere reach of creativity, reaching a level where two films based on the same book can articulate opposing ethical readings. This is because ethical interpretations depend largely on the context and the individual perspectives of the creators and viewers.

Thus, one film might interpret a book from an ethical perspective that emphasizes justice and redemption, while another film might focus on moral ambiguity and unresolved ethical dilemmas. Both readings are valid within their own interpretive contexts and reflect the capacity of ethics to adapt and evolve with new interpretations and circumstances.

For example, *Ossessione* (Visconti, 1943) and *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (Garnett, 1946). Although both films are based on the same novel, they present different ethical and narrative approaches.

Ossessione (Visconti, 1943)

Ossessione delves into the psychological and moral complexity of its characters, offering a more tragic and human view of their decisions. Visconti's adaptation is deeply rooted in the Italian neorealism movement, focusing on the gritty, harsh realities of life. The characters in *Ossessione* are portrayed with a profound sense of vulnerability and fatalism. The film emphasizes the moral ambiguity of the protagonists, presenting their actions as products of their environment and personal struggles rather than inherent evil. The scene with the eggs, for instance, is symbolic in *Ossessione*. It reflects the mundane yet desperate circumstances of the characters, adding layers of meaning to their everyday actions and interactions.

Ossessione is based on James M. Cain's 1934 novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. The story revolves around Gino, a drifter who arrives at the small roadside restaurant

owned by Giovanna and her husband, Bragana. After an initial interaction, Gino decides to stay and works at the restaurant, which intensifies his relationship with Giovanna, a woman trapped in a loveless marriage with a much older man.

The egg scene in *Ossessione* is an excellent example of how Visconti uses simple actions to explore deeper and more complex themes. Through this moment, the film not only develops the relationship between the characters, but also highlights the essence of Italian neorealism: finding beauty and drama in the most mundane details of daily life.

At one particular moment, Gino and Giovanna are alone in the kitchen. Gino, in an attempt to show off his skill and probably impress Giovanna, begins to prepare some fried eggs. The camera closely follows his movements as he carefully cracks the eggs and cooks them. Giovanna watches, and the tension between them is palpable.

The scene represents the mundanity of daily life in which the characters are trapped. Eggs, a simple staple food, reflect the routine and monotony of their lives. The act of cooking becomes a metaphor for the attraction and sexual tension between Gino and Giovanna. Each movement is deliberate and sensually charged, intensifying the chemistry between them.

Eggs, with their delicate shell, symbolize the fragility of the situation in which they find themselves. The relationship between Gino and Giovanna is dangerous and fragile, on the verge of breaking at any moment, just like the eggs that Gino handles so carefully.

Gino and Giovanna begin a passionate affair and plot to kill Bragana to free Giovanna and seize his wealth. The plot succeeds, but their guilt and mistrust begin to consume them, leading to a tragic end.

This scene, although seemingly trivial, serves to deepen the character of the protagonists and the dynamics of their relationship. The kitchen, a domestic and everyday space, is transformed into a stage of dramatic and emotional tension. Additionally, this scene highlights Visconti's style, which focuses on everyday details to reveal the complexities of the characters and their circumstances.

In *Ossessione*, the settings are worn and dilapidated, reflecting the realistic and gritty environment of Italian neorealism. This aesthetic is used to underscore the despair and deterioration in the characters' lives. The choice of these settings serves several purposes:

1. **Authenticity and Realism**: The deteriorated and neglected environments create a sense of authenticity, transporting the viewer to a tangible and lived-in world. This is characteristic of Italian neorealism, which sought to portray life as it is, with all its imperfections.
2. **Reflection of the Human Condition**: The run-down settings mirror the internal desolation and struggles of the characters. Gino and Giovanna live in a world where opportunities are scarce, and living conditions are harsh. Their decisions and actions are influenced by their environment, emphasizing social determinism and fatalism.
3. **Symbolism**: The worn-out settings symbolize the emotional and moral state of the characters. The oppressive and degraded atmosphere reinforces the sense of hopelessness and entrapment, echoing the destructive relationships and frustrated aspirations of the protagonists.

Ossessione was an unauthorized adaptation of Cain's novel, leading to legal issues. The film was not released in the United States until much later due to these copyright disputes. The unauthorized adaptation set a precedent for discussions on intellectual property rights and adaptations in international cinema.

The film was initially banned in Fascist Italy due to its stark portrayal of adultery and murder, as well as its pessimistic view of life. Despite this, *Ossessione* received critical acclaim and is now considered a classic of Italian neorealism. Critics praised Visconti's direction and the realistic portrayal of the characters and settings in the film.

The Postman Always Rings Twice *(Garnett, 1946)*

On the other hand, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* emphasizes fatality and moral punishment, aligning more with the film noir genre. Garnett's adaptation focuses on the suspense and tension inherent in the story, with a more pronounced sense of impending doom. The characters are driven by lust and greed, and their downfall is portrayed as an inevitable consequence of their immoral actions.

The 1946 film closely follows Cain's novel. Frank Chambers, a drifter, gets involved with Cora Smith, who is unhappy in her marriage to Nick, the owner of a roadside diner. Frank and Cora's affair leads them to plot Nick's murder. They succeed, but their relationship deteriorates as they face legal and moral consequences, ultimately leading to their destruction.

This version was a legitimate adaptation of Cain's novel, produced with the appropriate rights. It followed the Hollywood Production Code, which influenced its portrayal of crime and punishment, ensuring that the immoral actions of the protagonists were ultimately punished. The film was a commercial success and received positive reviews from critics. It was praised for its performances, particularly those of Lana Turner and John Garfield. The film is considered a classic example of film noir, noted for its tight screenplay, atmospheric cinematography, and exploration of themes like lust, greed, and the inevitability of fate.

In *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, the settings are hygienic and new, aligning the film with the stylized conventions of Hollywood film noir. These settings are used to convey a sense of superficial perfection and to hide the corruption and danger lurking beneath the facade:

Visual Contrast: The cleanliness and order of the settings in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* create a visual contrast with the murky actions and hidden desires of the characters. The impeccable aesthetic serves to highlight the dichotomy between appearance and reality, a recurring theme in film noir.

Atmosphere of Tension: The hygienic and well-maintained settings contribute to an atmosphere of tension and suspense. The superficial perfection hides intense passions and moral transgressions, heightening the sense of inevitable disaster as the plot progresses.

Reflection of Post-War Values: The choice of new and clean settings also reflects the values and expectations of post-war American society. Prosperity and order are promoted ideals, but the film reveals the cracks in this facade, exploring themes of desire and morality.

This contrast reflects how the same stories can be reinterpreted to explore different ethical and cultural aspects, emphasizing the idea that narratives can be shaped according to the context in which they are presented.

In *Ossessione*, the ethical inquiry is more about the human condition and social determinism. The characters' actions are portrayed as the result of their environment and personal struggles, with a focus on their psychological depth and moral ambiguity.

In *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, the focus is on moral absolutism and the inescapability of crime before the law. The characters' downfall is seen as an inevitable consequence of their immoral actions, fitting within the conventions of film noir where crime does not pay, and justice is ultimately served.

Both films offer valid interpretations but cater to different cinematic traditions and ethical considerations, showcasing the versatility of storytelling.

The criminal victim or the criminal victimizer

The aesthetic diversity in the representation of criminality and justice in film and literature reflects these polarizations. For example, films like *Ossessione* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice* not only present different aesthetic approaches but also offer contrasting views on morality and justice. While *Ossessione* addresses criminality from a humanistic and social determinism perspective, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* aligns more with the absolute morality of film noir, where crime must inevitably be punished. These divisions are rooted in different interpretations of justice, responsibility, and the underlying causes of criminality, and they continue to shape public discourse and policy in the 21st century.

Marx described the system of inequality in which 19th-century capitalism had plunged Europe. However, it was the National Socialist left that first preached, particularly in *Mein Kampf*, that those who control the world's money—whether they be moneylenders, bankers, or stockbrokers—are to blame for poverty and social abandonment. In Latin America, demagogues today conclude, justifying HAMAS terrorists, that criminals are criminals due to their poverty and that prostitutes sell their bodies also due to global inequality.

This contrast in narratives and approaches is not just a matter of artistic style but has profound ethical implications. Those who advocate for social reconciliation and total peace argue that it is necessary to understand and address the underlying causes of criminality, such as poverty and inequality. This perspective holds that punishment alone does not solve the structural problems that lead to criminality.

On the other hand, proponents of strict law enforcement argue that the rule of law is fundamental to maintaining social order and that criminals must be punished to deter crime and protect society. From this perspective, impunity is seen as a threat to justice and collective well-being. The aesthetic diversity of drama and cinema has had an ethical impact on the world, which is the cause of the rhetorical discourses that divide it in the second decade of the 21st century.

"There are no facts, only interpretations," Nietzsche wrote in 1886, in a universe seduced by the exactitude of the natural sciences. This statement by Nietzsche becomes a

reference framework for understanding how interpretations and narratives about justice, criminality, and social inequality have diversified and polarized over time.

The tension between these two approaches is reflected in politics, legislation, and public policies, creating divisions in society. The debate on how to address criminality and justice is fundamentally a debate about ethical values and the interpretation of morality in the context of contemporary social realities.

The Perception of the Universal Flood in Da Vinci

The analysis of the perception of the Universal Flood in Da Vinci, especially in the context of the principle of causality, leads us to delve into how the Renaissance artist and scientist understood and represented the relationship between events and their consequences.

For centuries, narrative theories have been reduced by Aristotelian exegetes to an arbitrary structure of "Introduction, conflict, and resolution". However, this approach often omits the complexity of the principle of causality, which is fundamental to the understanding of any narrative.

The principle of causality holds that every effect has a specific cause. In Da Vinci's case, this principle is manifested in his meticulous observation and representation of natural phenomena and their interconnection. His script for his work "The Universal Flood" is a classic example of how each image and detail within the composition interweaves to create a complex and multifaceted visual narrative.

Da Vinci understands that each image in his representation of the Flood is not just an isolated snapshot but a direct consequence of preceding events. The storm, the uprooting of trees, the torrents of water, and the animals and humans struggling to survive are all intrinsically connected by a chain of causality.

Sergei Eisenstein, in his book "The Film Sense" (1949), cites Da Vinci's description of the Universal Flood as a cinematic script. Eisenstein recognizes Da Vinci's ability to capture and represent the dynamics of a cataclysmic event with a clarity that transcends mere visual art and ventures into the realm of cinematic narrative:

> "Let the dark, gloomy air be seen beaten by the rush of opposing winds wreathed in perpetual rain mingled with hail, and bearing hither and thither a vast network of the torn branches of trees mixed together with an infinite number of leaves.
>
> All round let there be seen ancient trees uprooted and torn in pieces by the fury of the winds.
>
> You should show how fragments of mountains, which have been already stripped bare by the rushing torrents, fall headlong into the very torrents and choke up the valleys,
>
> Until the pent-up rivers rise in flood and cover the wide plains and their inhabitants.
>
> Again there might be seen huddled together on the tops of many of the mountains many different sorts of animals, terrified and subdued at last to a state of tameness, in company with men and women who had fled there with their children.

> And the fields which were covered with water had their waves covered over in great part with tables, bedsteads, boats and various other kinds of rafts, improvised through necessity and fear of death,
>
> Upon which were men and women with their children, massed together and uttering various cries and lamentations, dismayed by the fury of the winds which were causing the waters to roll over and over in mighty hurricane, bearing with them the bodies of the drowned[6]"

Analysis of the Concatenation of Causes and Consequences in Da Vinci's Passage

1. **Gloomy Atmosphere and Winds**:
   - **Cause**: The convergence of opposing winds and an intense storm.
   - **Effect**: The darkness of the air and perpetual rain, dragging branches and leaves.
2. **Uprooted Trees**:
   - **Cause**: The fury of the winds.
   - **Effect**: Centuries-old trees uprooted and shattered, showing the magnitude of the natural disaster.
3. **Fragments of Mountains**:
   - **Cause**: The torrential downpours.
   - **Effect**: Mountains crumbling and choking the valleys, leading to the flooding of the plains.
4. **Animals and Humans in Refuge**:
   - **Cause**: The rising floodwaters and lack of safe refuge.
   - **Effect**: Various species of animals and humans huddled together on mountain tops, sharing a common fate.
5. **Floating Objects and Human Desperation**:
   - **Cause**: Desperation and the need to survive.
   - **Effect**: People and animals on tables, bedsteads, and makeshift rafts, battling the fury of the winds and water.
6. **Drowned Bodies and Terrified Animals**:
   - **Cause**: The violence of the storm and waves.
   - **Effect**: The bodies of the drowned striking floating objects and terrified animals seeking refuge.

Da Vinci provides us with a testament to his ability to represent interconnected events with scientific and artistic precision. His work highlights the importance of viewing narratives not just as sequences of events, but as complex networks of causes and effects that reflect the reality of human and natural experience.

This analysis also underscores the need to integrate philosophy, classical literature, and the theory of perception in the study of cinema and other forms of visual narrative.

Cinema, a Demonstration of Our Finite Being in Infinite Time

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6 Leonardo da Vinci. (n.d.). Manuscrito de "El Diluvio Universal". En S. Eisenstein, Film Form: Essays in Film Theory (p. 25). Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.

Movement itself is an illusion grounded in causality:

> "For as that action or motion is nothing but the object itself, consider'd in a certain light, and as the object continues the same in all its different situations, 'tis easy to imagine how such an influence of objects upon one another may connect them in the imagination[7]".

By the late 19th century, filmmakers had exposed the mechanisms of movement. Each moment in time is, in fact, subdivided to infinity. However, our senses reject absolute perception (a process that would leave us in the universe of a given instant) to select twenty-four frames, or fixed instants, per second.

The Metaphysical Paradox of Infinity and Human Perception

The relationship between human perception of time and space and the infinite nature of the universe is a topic that has intrigued philosophers and scientists for centuries. This paradox is clearly manifested in the way we live and experience the world: mathematically, time and space are divisible to infinity, but our perceptions are limited and finite.

Cinema, like our senses, selects fragments of eternity:

> "An instant can be divided to infinity. Yet, we live in series of instants[8]" (Santander-Ferreira, 2024).

Cinema offers a perfect analogy for understanding this paradox. By projecting twenty-four frames per second, cinema creates the illusion of continuous movement. However, what we actually see are successive fixed images. This process is similar to how our senses perceive the world: we select discrete fragments of continuous reality to form a coherent perception; in an action scene in a film, each frame captures a static moment, but when projected in rapid succession, they create the experience of movement and continuity.

Similarly, our daily perceptions are a series of "frames" that our brain connects to form a continuous narrative of our experience.

Zeno of Elea, a Greek philosopher of the 5th century BC, is famous for formulating several paradoxes that challenge our notions of movement and continuity. One of the most well-known is the paradox of Achilles and the tortoise, which illustrates the seemingly infinite nature of time and space.

In the paradox, Achilles, the Greek hero, competes in a race against a tortoise. Achilles, being much faster, gives the tortoise a head start. Zeno argues that because

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7 Hume, 1739, op. cit.

8 Santander-Ferreira, H. N. (2018). Zeno, Achilles, the turtle and the demonstration of infinity. The Philosopher, 106(2). Retrieved from http://www.the-philosopher.co.uk/2018/12/zeno-and-demonstration-of-infinity.html Chapter of Santander-Ferreira, H. N. (2024). You are the Universe. Metaphysics. Stanley.

Achilles must first reach the point where the tortoise started, and meanwhile the tortoise will have moved a bit further, Achilles can never catch up to the tortoise because there will always be a new point he must reach first. This sequence of steps can be divided infinitely, suggesting that Achilles will never catch the tortoise, although in reality, we know he will.

Mathematically, the paradox is based on the notion of infinite series. The distance Achilles must cover can be divided into an infinite series of increasingly smaller intervals. The sum of these intervals, though infinite in number, converges to a finite value. This is an early illustration of the concept of limits in calculus, where the sum of an infinite series of finite terms can be a finite number.

Zeno's paradox has been fundamental in the development of calculus and in understanding limits and infinite series. It also raises profound questions about the nature of space and time. Are they truly continuous, or are they composed of discrete units? This question remains relevant in modern physics, especially in quantum theory and relativity theory.

Imagine Achilles running under the scorching sun, each step a promise of catching the tortoise. However, on the horizon, the tortoise continues to move slowly, each time a bit further ahead. Achilles' steps, though powerful and fast, never manage to reach the next point where the tortoise was. This scenario highlights the endless division of space and time, where each interval can be divided infinitely, making the destination seem always one step beyond our reach.

Mathematically, we can divide any unit of time or space to infinity. However, our perceptual capacities cannot process this infinitude. This creates an inherent tension between the theoretical infinitude of the universe and our finite perception of it.

The mentioned paradox poses significant metaphysical questions:

Mathematics suggests that time and space are infinitely divisible.

Our perception is limited; we can only experience a finite number of moments and spaces.

If we accept that the universe is infinite, we face the challenge of understanding something that is inherently ungraspable by our finite mind.

The other option is that the universe is finite, an idea that science has yet to conclusively demonstrate.

> "Mathematically, we live in an infinity, in eternity; however, we are beings that perceive finitely, as cinema demonstrates" (Santander-Ferreira, 2024).

Georges Méliès: Magic, Science Fiction, and 19th-Century Positivism

Georges Méliès, one of the most important pioneers of cinema, not only incorporated his experience in theatrical illusionism into cinematography but also integrated elements of science fiction, creating a magical space that reflected the triumphant confidence in science of 19th-century positivism.

Méliès used various techniques to create special effects in his films, such as substitution, multiple exposure, and painting on glass. These techniques allowed him to create visual illusions that were surprising and fascinating for the audiences of the time.

For example, in *A Trip to the Moon* (*Voyage dans la Lune*, 1902), Méliès showed a rocket traveling to the Moon, using detailed models and substitution effects to make the journey seem real.

Méliès' science fiction was deeply influenced by 19th-century positivism, a thought current that emphasized the importance of scientific knowledge and rationality. *A Trip to the Moon* is not only a masterpiece of cinematic magic but also a manifestation of the scientific optimism of the time. The film reflects the belief in scientific progress and human capability to conquer space, ideas that were burgeoning due to the technological and scientific advances of the era.

Méliès managed to integrate magic and science in a way that deeply resonated with the audience of his time. Science fiction became a "magical space" where the seemingly impossible was made possible thanks to scientific advances. This fusion of magic and science is evident in how Méliès presented his fantastic narratives with an apparently scientific basis, creating a bridge between entertainment and knowledge.

Méliès was not only a pioneer of cinema but also a key figure in the world of theatrical illusionism. His role as president of the Chambre Syndicale des Artistes Illusionistes from 1895 to 1935 is a testament to his influence in both fields.

Méliès used his experience in theatrical illusionism to revolutionize cinema with innovative special effects and cinematographic techniques that transformed the way stories were told on screen.

Let's see how Méliès incorporated magic into cinema:

Substitution and Disappearance Effects

Méliès used the substitution technique, where the camera was stopped, the scene was altered, and then the recording resumed. This created the illusion of objects and people appearing or disappearing magically. A notable example is *The Man with the Rubber Head* (*L'homme à la tête en caoutchouc*, 1901), where a human head is shown inflating and deflating.

Multiple Exposure and Superimposition

Using multiple exposure, Méliès could superimpose several images on the same strip of film. This allowed him to create ghosts and other supernatural effects, as seen in *The Haunted Castle* (*Le Manoir du diable*, 1896). The superimposition of images helped build fantastic scenes that seemed impossible in real life.

Elaborate Scenery and Models

The use of detailed sets and models allowed Méliès to create imaginary worlds and extraordinary situations. In *A Trip to the Moon* (*Voyage dans la Lune*, 1902), the scenery and models of the planets and the rocket contributed to creating a visually impressive environment that transported viewers on a celestial journey.

Jump Cuts and Innovative Editing

Méliès employed jump cuts to quickly change from one scene to another, giving

the sensation of instant movement or transformation. In *The Eccentric Man in Motion* (*L'homme mouche*, 1902), he used quick cuts to show a man performing impossible actions like flying or disappearing.

Glass Painting

A lesser-known but very effective technique was glass painting, where Méliès painted elements on glass plates and placed them in front of the camera to integrate them with the actors and sets. This allowed the creation of complex and detailed visual effects without the need for advanced technology.

Optical Tricks

Méliès also experimented with optical tricks, using mirrors and lenses to distort reality and create visual illusions. This included techniques such as the "trick camera," where perspective was manipulated to change the size of objects or people.

A Trip to the Moon is also known for its innovative use of special effects and cinematic techniques. In this film, Méliès takes us on a celestial journey where planets and constellations are anthropomorphized, and the terrestrial travellers are attacked by an army of lunar inhabitants. This visual masterpiece combines elements of science fiction with an overflowing imagination, something unprecedented at the time.

Méliès' reputation as a pioneer of cinema is widely recognized. Louis Lumière, one of the inventors of cinema, and René Clair, a prominent French film director, considered him the inventor of the cinematic spectacle. Henri Langlois, founder of the Cinémathèque Française, defined him as the first auteur of cinema, while Georges Sadoul, a film historian, named him the father of art cinema. These accolades highlight not only his creativity but also his ability to transform cinema into a legitimate art form.

The film *Hugo* by Martin Scorsese (2012) pays homage to Méliès, highlighting his contribution to artistic direction in cinema. However, this film fails to emphasize his greatest contribution: the ability to represent dramatic stories, a talent that directly derives from his experience in theatre. Méliès used his knowledge of theatrical magic and illusionism to create impressive special effects, allowing him to tell stories in a visually captivating manner.

Georges Méliès was not only a master of cinematic illusionism but also a visionary who used science fiction to reflect the spirit of 19th-century positivism. His films inspired audiences to imagine a future where science could make the most fantastic dreams come true. Méliès not only revolutionized cinema with his imagination and innovative techniques but also demonstrated that cinema could be a legitimate and complex art form by adopting theatrical narratives and moving away from its ties to documentary photography, which was its first manifestation, that of the Lumière brothers. His legacy endures in every film that uses special effects to tell a story, reminding us that cinema is, in essence, a form of magic.

The Kuleshov Effect and the Limitations of Causality

Lev Kuleshov, filmmaker and professor at the First State School of Cinema in

Moscow, is known for his innovative experiment that led to the discovery of the "Kuleshov effect." This effect studies the possibilities and limitations of causality in cinema, demonstrating how montage can influence the viewer's perception and emotions.

The experiment consists of an extended close-up of the expressionless face of actor Ivan Mozzhukhin, interspersed with three different images: a steaming bowl of soup, a woman in a coffin, and a child playing with a teddy bear. Despite the actor's face not changing in any of the shots, the audience interpreted his expressions differently based on the context provided by the alternating images.

Kuleshov observed that:

> "The audience praised the artist's performance. They noted the profound thoughtfulness of his mood over the forgotten soup; they were moved and emotional over the deep sorrow with which he looked at the dead woman; they admired the light and happy smile with which he observed the girl playing. But we knew that in all three cases, the face was exactly the same[9]" (Kuleshov, cited by Pudovkin, 1929).

Interpretation and Causality

The "Kuleshov effect" demonstrates that the meaning of a shot is not determined solely by its individual content but also by its relationship with the surrounding shots. This means that two shots projected in succession are not interpreted separately by the viewer; in the audience's mind, they are integrated into a whole. The effect can be expressed through the equation A + B = C, where A and B are independent images.

Kuleshov's discovery carries significant implications for montage and cinematic narrative. It shows how filmmakers can manipulate the audience's perception through the juxtaposition of images. This principle has been fundamental in the theory and practice of cinema, influencing numerous filmmakers and editors throughout film history.

Lev Kuleshov, through his famous experiment, not only revealed a crucial aspect of cinematic perception but also highlighted the importance of montage as a powerful narrative tool. His work reminds us that cinema, like our everyday perceptions, is constructed from fragments that, when combined, create new meanings and emotions.

The Propagandistic Rhetoric of 20th-Century Socialist Movements

In 1924, Eisenstein placed post-production first, above all other stages of film production. Aware of the failures of perception, Eisenstein relied on the dialectic of montage. But by stretching the limits of perception, he inadvertently opened the doors of cinema to propaganda. The greatest rhetorical film of the 20th century is not *Triumph of the Will* (1935) by Riefenstahl, but *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) by Eisenstein.

Commissioned by the coordinating committee for the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the 1905 revolution, Eisenstein portrayed a state that mistreats soldiers and children. But the uprising of the marble lion, the greatest achievement of communist propaganda, only occurs after the viewer has witnessed the shooting of a defenceless

9 Pudovkin, V. I. (1929). Film Direction. New York: Grove Press. p. 74.

woman carrying her dead son and the fall of an ownerless baby carriage bouncing down the Odessa Steps. Riefenstahl, on the other hand, glorifies technology, discipline, and water sports.

Her images are not convincing but imposing. The portrayal of Hitler as a leader of hygienic men aimed to suppress, rather than seduce, dissent. Although Berta Helene Amalia Riefenstahl's staging became a symbol of Nazi Germany, indignation against the powerful proved to be more effective than sympathy towards the complacent.

Humans and animals perceive, but only humans recreate perception. The book is the only medium that requires the active complicity of its reader. The written narration of the fall of Constantinople by Edward Gibbon in the final chapter of *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is far more convincing than the invasion of Normandy by Steven Spielberg. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* maintains its hierarchy over the violent sequences of *Throne of Blood* (*Kumonosu-jo*, 1957) by Kurosawa. With the end of silent cinema, commercial cinema has impoverished not only our imagination but also our power of reflection.

The Script as a Detective Puzzle According to Ionesco

Since causality is based on two logically independent events, perception is articulated as a puzzle. I hear a sound. I perceive. But that perception remains suspended until I question my mind about its meaning. Henri hears a noise. Admiration bursts forth, and Henri formulates a wordless puzzle in his mind. "It's thundering," he concludes. A unit of perception is established. "Will it rain?" Any question triggers a second question, this or a third, and so on. What maintains the dynamics of this process is our sense of wonder, the θαυμάζω, in an unpredictable world. As our mind yearns to understand, we are subjects of the why and the what for. An epistemological conflict arises. Without an immediate answer, we endure suspense; each question burns in our mind until it finds its answer: true or false.

One of the characters in Eugène Ionesco's *Victims of Duty* states:

> "All the works written by men, from antiquity to now, have been nothing but detective stories. The theatre has been nothing but a realistic stage of detective plots... There is a mystery that is revealed to us in the last scene[10]."

Ionesco praises or satirizes writers who structure their work around a central conflict. As a playwright, he clearly understood that the foundations of a dramatic work are based on a given question. *Hamlet* could be considered a treatise on psychology and suicide, but prior to these didactic interpretations, it is perceived as the story of a man who wants to murder his stepfather, tormented by the detective dilemma: Is the spirit I

10 "Toutes les pièces qui ont été écrites, depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'à nos jours, n'ont jamais été que policières. Le théatre n'a jamais été que réaliste et policier (...) Il y a une énigme, qui nous est révélée à la dernière scène." Ionesco, E. (1954). La cantatrice chauve ; La leçon ; Jacques ou la soumission ; Les chaises ; Victimes du devoir ; Amédée ou Comment s'en débarrasser. Paris: Gallimard, p. 179.

see that of my father or that of a demon that wants to condemn me? (*Hamlet*, Act 2, Scene 2):

> *The spirit that I have seen*
> *May be a devil, and the devil hath power*
> *To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and, perhaps,*
> *Out of my weakness and my melancholy,*
> *As he is very potent with such spirits,*
> *Abuses me to damn me.*

In Ionesco's *The Lesson*, the absurd plot perfectly illustrates the logic of causality and perception. A seemingly respectable professor becomes a tyrant with his student, progressively increasing intellectual and emotional pressure until the situation becomes untenable. The play unfolds in a cycle of questions and answers, where the absence of the expected answer from the professor leads to an increase in tension, culminating in a tragic and absurd outcome as the involuntary murder.

The dynamic between the characters reflects how unanswered questions can lead to chaos and despair, highlighting the human struggle for knowledge and understanding in a world that often seems irrational and meaningless.

3. Conflict is the Minimum Dramatic Unit

Since Aristotle, it has been mistakenly assumed that action is the unit of narration. The fall of a clock, the swing of a pendulum, or the simple act of walking could be, under such a perspective, the basic element of a given literary work. Aristotle was very aware of the vagueness of his conception and specified that such action should be complete, understanding completeness as something that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. This conception was unevenly assimilated over the centuries in various cultures by different poets and scholars, from Horace's *Ars Poetica* to Lope de Vega's *The New Art of Writing Plays*, from Ludovico Castelvetro's *Poetics* to Antonio Minturno's *Art of Poetry*.

In recent times, the study of narration has shifted from focusing exclusively on the creation of literary texts to exploring how meaning is generated and communicated through narrative. This transition reflects a broader and more complex understanding of narration as a means to structure and communicate human experiences.

Jean-François Lyotard, in his work *The Postmodern Condition*[11] (1979), introduced the concept of "meta-narrative." According to Lyotard, meta-narratives are grand narratives or interpretative frameworks that seek to make sense of and legitimize human experiences and knowledge through a coherent and universal story. These meta-narratives have been used to justify various social and political structures, but in the postmodern era, Lyotard argues that these totalizing narratives are being questioned and fragmented.

Walter Fisher, in his narrative theory, emphasizes the importance of narration in human communication. Fisher posits that humans are essentially "homo narrans"—natural storytellers—and that narratives are the primary way we make sense of our experiences and persuade others. In his work *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action*[12] (1987), Fisher proposes that narrative coherence and fidelity are essential criteria for evaluating the quality of narratives.

Criticism of these approaches has been equally significant. The tendency to assign the value of verisimilitude to reality through narrative can, according to some critics, undermine discourse. This perspective suggests that narrative can simplify or distort the complexity of reality, creating stories that, while convincing, may not be entirely accurate or fair.

Bertolt Brecht raised significant criticisms of what he called "Aristotelian dramaturgy," which focuses on the emotional identification of the spectator with the characters and the narrative structure based on conflict[13]. Brecht argued for a form of epic theatre that fostered a critical and reflective attitude in the spectator, rather than

11 Lyotard, J.-F. (1979). La condición posmoderna: informe sobre el saber. Les Éditions de Minuit.
12 Fisher, W. R. (1987). Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action. University of South Carolina Press.
13 Brecht, B. (1964). Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic. Hill and Wang.

passive emotional identification. His ideas remain a subject of debate and have influenced the evolution of theatre and narrative.

Despite these criticisms, conflict remains a fundamental unit of narration. The narrative structure based on conflict provides a clear and dynamic framework for the exploration of themes and character development. The tension and resolution of conflicts allow narrators to maintain audience interest and effectively communicate complex messages.

Moreover, contemporary academia has tended towards anti-Aristotelian approaches. The work of Janilek, which received the Nobel Prize, is an example of this. His rejection of traditional structure and the lack of clear causality in his narratives were initially celebrated, but over time, his failure to connect with the mass audience demonstrated that humans perceive and understand the world through the principle of causality.

While contemporary theories and criticisms have questioned and expanded the understanding of narrative beyond traditional Aristotelian structures, conflict and causality remain essential elements in how we comprehend and engage with stories.

Ideal Duration of a Drama

According to Aristotle, action should be complete, having a beginning, a middle, and an end. He presents a dual concept regarding the length of the plot, which can go from happiness to unhappiness or vice versa, without employing more than one change of fortune. Indeed, practice shows that too many changes of fortune cause a narrative to lose its credibility and coherence.

Ideal length 1: HAPPINESS→UNHAPPINESS
Ideal length 2: UNHAPPINESS→HAPPINESS

Wild Things (1998) by John McNaughton is an erotic thriller that challenges this Aristotelian notion of plot length. The film is known for its multiple plot twists, which make it unbelievable and, at times, laughable.

The film begins with a rape accusation against school counsellor Sam Lombardo (Matt Dillon) by wealthy student Kelly Van Ryan (Denise Richards) and her friend Suzie Toller (Neve Campbell). The first twist reveals that the accusation was false and part of a plan to get insurance money from Kelly's mother.

Later, Detective Ray Duquette (Kevin Bacon) discovers that Sam, Kelly, and Suzie are working together in an even more elaborate scheme.

The third twist shows that Suzie wasn't working alone, but Detective Ray was also involved.

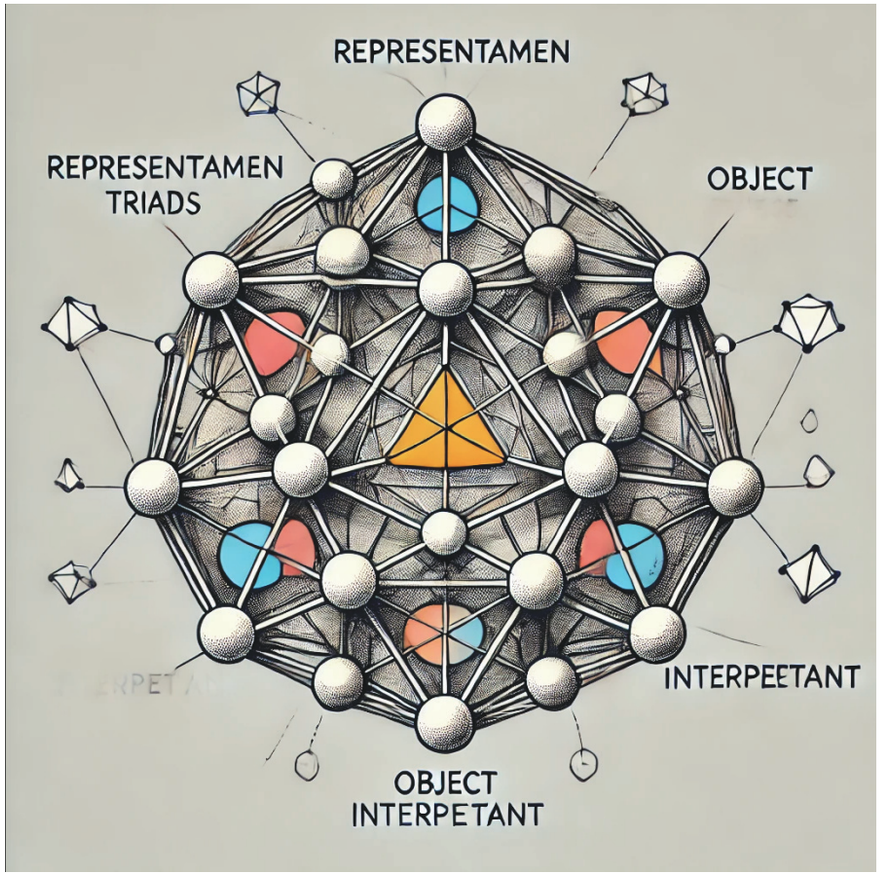
Finally, in a fourth twist (!), Suzie betrays everyone and keeps the money.

The film tries to surprise the viewer with these twists but sacrifices coherence and plausibility in doing so. For Aristotle, a plot should be coherent and maintain at least one clear line of event development. In *Wild Things*, the multiple changes of fortune make the story seem forced and unrealistic, leading the viewer to lose interest in the narrative.

Weaving Conflicts in a Two-Hour Drama

From personal experience, both as a reader and a writer, I have observed that a conflict does not last more than five minutes. Its minimum duration can be very few seconds. Such duration can be deduced not only from dramaturgy but also from natural world events. A predator attacks its prey. The prey struggles to escape. The prey escapes.

The length of a film or play will therefore depend on the dramatist's ability to weave approximately 25 conflicts. Each conflict articulates an event. An event has two parts: a why and a what for. This why reveals a new conflict to the viewer, as does a what for, and thus, with this double hook, the dramatist "hangs" new conflicts following the triadic structure of the sign exposed by Peirce's semiotics.



The Triadic Sign of Peirce and the Principle of Causality in Narrative

The triadic sign of Charles Sanders Peirce is a fundamental concept in his semiotic theory, which applies effectively to narrative analysis and the principle of causality.

Peirce proposes that the sign has three essential components: the representamen (the cause of the conflict recreated in the mind of the viewer), the object (the conflict), and the interpretant (the consequence of the conflict or its final outcome). This model allows us to analyse how one sign connects to another, creating a polygonal structure in the narrative.

Triadic Sign of Peirce

1. **Representamen**: The physical form of the sign, the expression perceived sensorially; Peirce refers to this as the CAUSE.
2. **Object**: The reality or concept to which the sign refers; this is the CONFLICT.
3. **Interpretant**: The mental meaning formed in the receiver's mind when interacting with the sign; this corresponds to the CONSEQUENCE that the principle of causality demands in our mind.

Rewriting his concepts from our investigations, Peirce proposes that the sign has three essential components:

Triadic Sign of Peirce Applied to the Principle of Causality

1. **Representamen**: The cause of the conflict recreated in the mind of the viewer.
2. **Object**: The conflict itself.
3. **Interpretant**: The consequence of the conflict or its final outcome, which often becomes the cause (representamen) of a new conflict.

In narrative, the interpretant of a sign can become the representamen of a new sign, establishing a continuous chain that creates a polygonal structure. This mechanism allows the story to evolve and become more complex through a series of interconnected conflicts.

Application to Narrative and the Principle of Causality

The principle of causality manifests through the interconnection of signs in the narrative. Each conflict can be broken down into its representamen, object, and interpretant, and its resolution sets the stage for a new conflict, maintaining the coherence and dynamism of the story.

Example 1: Game of Thrones

In *Game of Thrones*, conflicts interweave to form a complex polygonal structure where each interpretant becomes a new representamen, triggering new conflicts.

Case: The Fall of Ned Stark

1. **Introduction or Cause of Conflict 1 (Representamen)**
   - Ned Stark arrives at King's Landing to serve as Hand of the King, determined to uncover the truth about Jon Arryn's death.
2. **Development of Conflict (Object)**
   - As Ned investigates, he discovers the Lannisters' secrets and the incest

between Cersei and Jaime. His actions lead to his arrest and eventual trial.

3. **Resolution and Meaning (Interpretant)**
   - Ned Stark's execution shocks the viewers and sets up new conflicts:
     - **Conflict 2**: Sansa Stark marries the minister of the Eyrie castle as part of her survival and revenge strategy.
     - **Conflict 3**: Arya Stark embarks on a journey around the world, training to become an invincible warrior.

In this example, Ned Stark's execution (interpretant) becomes the new representamen for his daughters' conflicts, creating a chain of events that drives the narrative forward.

Example 2: Psycho (Hitchcock, 1960)

In *Psycho*, conflicts interweave similarly, creating a complex and suspenseful narrative.

Conflict 1: The Theft and Flight of Marion Crane

1. **Introduction of Conflict 1 (Representamen)**
   - Marion Crane is tempted to steal a sum of money from her workplace, hoping to start a new life with her lover.
2. **Development of Conflict (Object)**
   - Marion decides to steal the money and flees Phoenix, encountering her boss and a terrifying policeman along the way. During her flight, Marion gets caught in a storm, leading her to seek refuge at the Bates Motel.
3. **Resolution and Meaning (Interpretant)**
   - Marion takes refuge at the Bates Motel, where she is murdered by an elderly woman who has shown overprotective behaviour towards her maladjusted son, Norman Bates.

Conflict 2: The Mystery of the Bates Motel

1. **Cause of Conflict 2 (Representamen)**
   - Marion's disappearance and the stolen money trigger a dual investigation by her sister Lila and private detective Arbogast.
2. **Development of Conflict 2 (Object)**
   - Lila and Arbogast face the mysterious and dangerous atmosphere of the Bates Motel, attempting to discover the whereabouts of the money and Marion.
3. **Resolution and Meaning 2 (Interpretant)**
   - The revelation that the money is in the car in a swamp and that Norman Bates is the killer, controlled by his dead mother's personality, concludes the story.

In *Psycho*, the interpretant of the first conflict (Marion's death) becomes the representamen of the new conflict (the investigation into her disappearance and the truth about Norman Bates), demonstrating how narratives can develop complexities through

the interconnection of signs.

The triadic model of Peirce explains how each sign hooks onto another, creating a polygonal structure rich in meanings. The interconnection of signs and the changes of fortune in characters illustrate the complexity and dynamism of narrative, reflecting how causality and interpretation are fundamental to constructing impactful and coherent stories in the viewer's or reader's mind.

Oedipus Rex by Sophocles, the Ideal Drama

In *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles, the principle of causality clearly manifests in its main conflict. The conflict generates suspense and expectation: the plague spreads in Thebes. Why? For what?

1. **Representamen**: The plague ravaging Thebes.
2. **Object**: The cause of the plague, which is linked to Oedipus' past and the murder of Laius.
3. **Interpretant**: The interpretation by the audience and Oedipus himself of the causes and consequences of his actions, culminating in the revelation of his true identity and the fulfilment of the prophecy.

This unresolved conflict is soon surpassed and replaced by Tiresias' humiliation. Before depicting Jocasta's suicide, Sophocles leads the audience to question the fate of a blind seer. The conflicts trigger a tripartite epistemological element, drawn between an unknown motivation and an unexpected outcome, a trident that the screenwriter articulates as various possible causes and consequences.

Each event in the plot triggers a new series of conflicts and questions that maintain the tension and interest of the viewer. The search for answers and the resolution of conflicts form a continuous chain of causality that drives the narrative forward.

Sub conflicts, therefore, in a dramatic work that constantly captures the audience's attention, must be organically articulated, as in *Dracula* (Browning, 1930), and not import external conflicts unrelated as a cause or consequence of another conflict, as occurs in many films that end up being explained as akin to museum paintings; examples of such pseudo-artistic poses include *Post Tenebras Lux* (2012), a film inflated by pseudo-critics where the director piles up sequences of his video camera recording his child, with disparate conflicts.

It is the intertwined conflicts that make the most celebrated tragedies, dramas, or novels arouse the viewer/reader's curiosity from the beginning.

A film that has fascinated generations despite, or precisely because of, its philosophical content is *Persona* (Bergman, 1966).

Analysis and Breakdown of Conflicts and Sub conflicts in Persona by Ingmar Bergman

Film: *Persona*
Director: Ingmar Bergman
Duration: 2 hours

Persona is a masterpiece that explores identity, communication, and both internal and external conflicts through the relationship between two women: Elisabet Vogler and Alma.

Main Conflict in Persona

Conflict: Elisabet falls silent in the middle of a theatrical performance

Cause: Bergman provides elements for the audience to piece together the reasons for Elisabet's silence without giving a precise cause.

Consequence: Elisabet breaks her silence without clarifying whether she was silent due to illness or caprice.

Analysis: The choice of *Electra* as the play in which Elisabet Vogler goes silent in *Persona* by Ingmar Bergman is no coincidence. This Greek drama, written by Sophocles, centres on themes of vengeance, suffering, and the complexity of family relationships, resonating with the internal conflicts of the characters in *Persona*.

Elisabet Vogler's silence exemplifies the powerlessness of women to avenge the atrocities inherited from other women. This act of silence becomes a powerful symbol of the inability to confront historical and personal injustices.

Electra is consumed by a desire for revenge against her mother, Clytemnestra, and her lover, Aegisthus, for the murder of her father, Agamemnon. However, Electra lacks the power to execute this revenge herself and depends on her brother Orestes. This feeling of powerlessness is reflected in Elisabet, who has inherited the Christian moral commandment "Thou shalt not kill," and faces her own internal demons and a society that perpetuates inherited injustices and atrocities.

Bergman addresses contemporary themes of exaggerated freedoms and the consequences of a society that allows wars and poverty. By silencing herself, Elisabet rejects a world that has permitted atrocities, manifesting the inability of women to change the course of historical events shaped by the decisions and actions of other women and men before them.

Elisabet represents a generation that has inherited irresolvable conflicts. The film echoes the despair of those who see that traditional power structures (symbolized by the "betrayed father") can no longer be redeemed or effectively confronted in an era marked by apparent freedom and moral decadence.

In another Bergman film, *The Rite* (1969), similar themes are explored. The protagonist, a Swede, contemplates suicide when facing a reality where global powers like China threaten the use of nuclear weapons. This context of despair and the inability to change the course of events, according to my own interpretation from the pieces Bergman provides, causes Elisabet's silence, a protest or resignation against a world that has allowed such crises to emerge.

A powerful statement of the female impotence to confront and avenge inherited injustices, Elisabet's despair and criticism against war and poverty are certainly more effective in the context of the 1960s, an era of apparent individual liberties. Bergman tortures his viewers with this symbolism to question the effectiveness of individual action in a world marked by irresolvable historical and contemporary conflicts.

The main conflict in *Persona* expands into a web of complex and intertwined conflicts that encompass thorny issues such as identity, perception, and human communication. Bergman's skill in weaving these conflicts into a coherent and deeply emotional narrative makes *Persona* a masterpiece of psychological and dramatic cinema.

Below is a breakdown of the conflicts and sub conflicts, all related to the main conflict:

Time (min)	Conflicts	Causes or Consequences
0-5	Introduction to Elisabet's condition	Elisabet's mental health issues, hospitalization.
5-10	Initial relationship between Elisabet and Alma	Alma assigned to care for Elisabet, initial trust development.
10-15	Elisabet's silence – main conflict	Alma's frustration with the lack of communication.
15-20	Move to the summer house	Adapting to a new environment, beginning of cohabitation.
20-30	Non-verbal communication	Alma tries to understand Elisabet through gestures and facial expressions.
30-40	Secrets revealed	Alma shares personal confidences, vulnerability.
40-50	Identity and roles	Identity confusion, Alma begins to assume aspects of Elisabet's personality.
50-60	Sexual and emotional tension	Attraction and rejection, exploration of repressed sexuality and emotions.
60-70	Confrontation about motherhood	Alma confronts Elisabet about her failed motherhood, guilt, and resentment.
70-80	Identity crisis	Alma loses her sense of identity, believes she is merging with Elisabet.
80-90	Emotional breakdown	Alma violently confronts Elisabet, internal struggle.
90-100	Reflection and catharsis	Alma reflects on her actions, tries to reconcile with herself and Elisabet.
100-110	Ambiguous ending	Elisabet breaks her silence, leaving open questions about the nature of their relationship and her recovery.

Sub conflicts

1. Alma's erotic story: Alma narrates a sexual encounter on the beach, revealing aspects of her psychology and emotional vulnerability.
2. The unborn child: Dreamlike scenes presenting a child attempting to touch a woman's projected face, symbolizing the desire for contact and communication barriers.
3. Elisabet's role as a mother: Confrontations about her feelings of guilt and rejection towards her child.
4. Elisabet's letters: Alma discovers letters Elisabet has written, revealing hidden thoughts and feelings.
5. Meeting with Elisabet's husband: An episode that questions reality and identity, with Alma taking on Elisabet's role.
6. The nail scene: A symbolic moment of violence where Alma threatens Elisabet with a nail, reflecting her desperation and rage.
7. The war photograph narration: Elisabet faces images of war, an internal conflict about humanity and compassion.
8. The performance of *Electra*: Elisabet falls silent in the middle of a theatrical performance, highlighting her rejection of language and her previous life.
9. The night bath: Alma and Elisabet share an intimate moment in the sea, which turns disturbing and symbolic.
10. Alma's dream: Recurring dreams exploring her fears and growing identification with Elisabet.
11. The photo burning: A symbolic act where Alma burns a photograph, trying to erase Elisabet's identity.
12. **12. The Return to the House:** Alma and Elisabet return to the house after a confrontation, reflecting an attempt at reconciliation and normalcy.

The Triad, the Ideal Conflict Scheme

We thus understand that the triadic structure is the most ideal for creating and resolving conflicts in the narrative. To maintain audience interest, the Auteur must relate the conflict to an interpreter seeking causes and consequences (Peirce) and present each conflict with possible causes and/or consequences. This approach allows the narrative to flow logically and coherently, keeping the viewer engaged through the progression of conflicts and resolutions.

Les 400 Coups

Les 400 Coups (The 400 Blows, 1958) by Truffaut portrays a young boy, Antoine Doinel, who lies to his mother, stepfather, and tutor. Viewers try to solve the enigma articulated by this conflict. Its resolution occurs almost immediately when Antoine's mother discovers him on the street, but it is then replaced by a new conflict: the boy realizes that his mother has a lover.

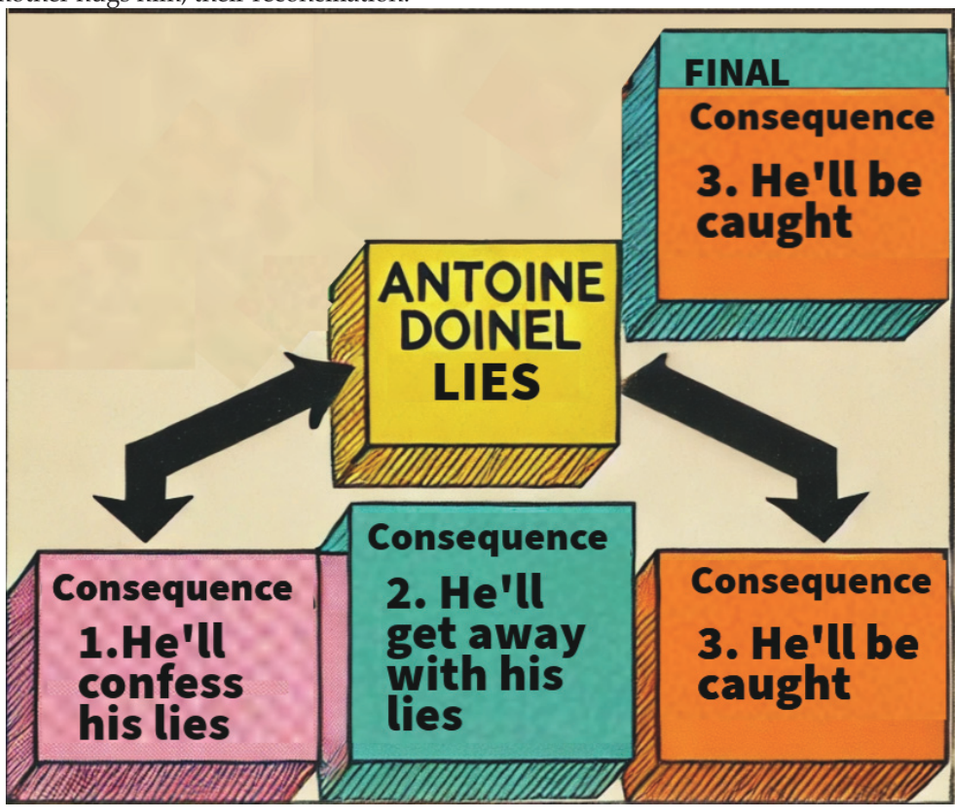
Representamen: The physical form of the sign (Antoine's lie).

Object: The reality or concept to which the sign refers (the truth that Antoine hides).

Interpretant: The mental meaning formed in the receiver's mind (the possible consequences of Antoine's lies).

As the film progresses, we also understand the causes of each particular conflict. When Antoine lies to his mentors, he reacts against a history of neglect and misunderstandings. New conflicts and new series of possible outcomes arise, all constructed in the viewer's mind as the film unfolds. When the school director

reprimands him, the outcome seems to be his reclusion in a correctional facility; when his mother hugs him, their reconciliation.

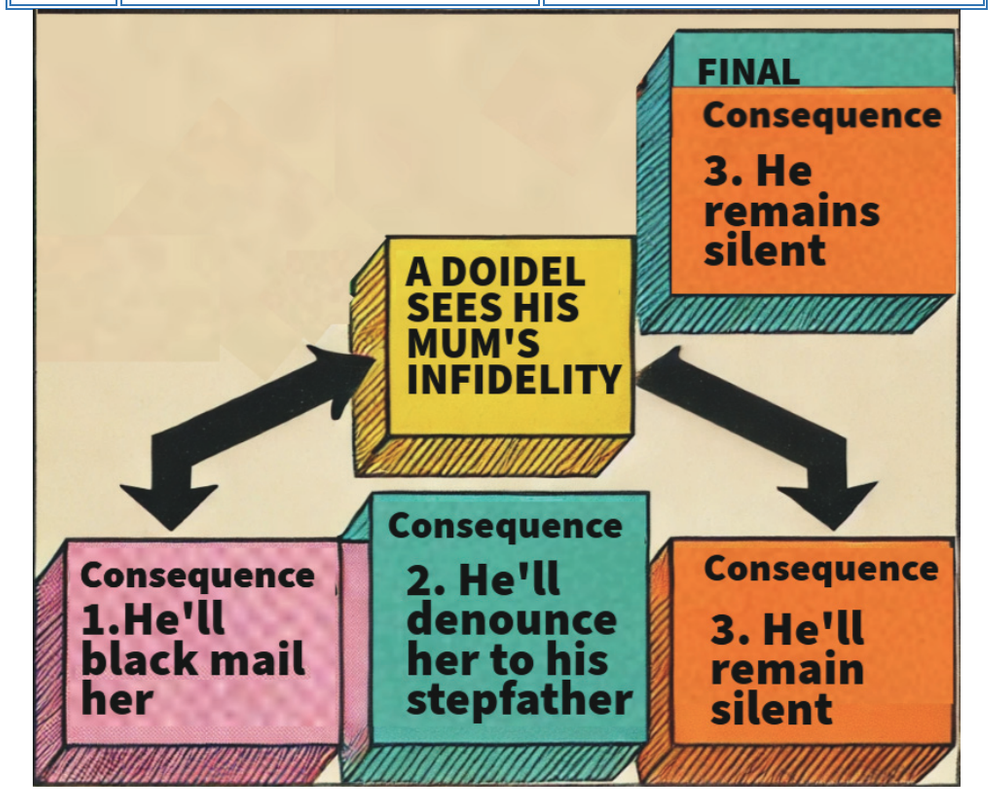


His escape and precipitated arrival at the beach become an unexpected yet believable consequence.

Conflicts and Sub conflicts

Time (min)	Main Conflict	Sub conflicts
0-5	Introduction to Antoine's state	Family problems, school problems.
5-10	Antoine lies to his mother	Mother discovers the lie.
10-15	Tense relationship with the stepfather	Stepfather reacts negatively to Antoine's lies.
15-20	Antoine's school performance	Problems with the tutor, poor academic performance.

Time (min)	Main Conflict	Sub conflicts
20-30	Antoine discovers his mother's lover	Emotional confrontation, confusion.
30-40	Mother's reaction	Distrust, attempt at reconciliation.
40-50	School director reprimands Antoine	Possible expulsion, conflict with school authority.
50-60	Antoine runs away	Feelings of rejection and despair.
60-70	Life in the correctional facility	Adaptation to the new environment, conflicts with other inmates.
70-80	Attempted reconciliation with mother	Emotional tension, feelings of guilt and forgiveness.
80-90	Antoine's escape	Planning the escape, feelings of freedom and fear.
90-100	Arrival at the beach	Reflection on his life, internal conflict about his future.



Museum Cinema: Boring for Conventional Cinephiles, Beautiful for Visual Artists

Today, it surprises us to know that Thomas De Quincey wrote with horror in his story *The English Mail-Coach* that his carriage reached the dangerous (!) speed of 35 kilometres per hour. Although perception is common to all humanity, astonishment is conditioned by education, ideology, and will. Thunderstorms were a widespread cause of anxiety among men and women before Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning rod.

Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat (1896) by the Lumière brothers made Parisian spectators at the Grand Café step back from the screen as the train approached. This photographic record remains an anecdotal document for new generations conditioned by theatrical narrative.

The principle of causality illustrates the narrative and maintains that each event must be logically linked to a cause and a consequence. When this structure breaks, the viewer cannot follow the story's logic, leading to boredom. Without being able to grasp a cause or consequence, the viewer's mind wanders.

Attention is also based on habits. A museum-goer does not require a narrator to contemplate a work of art for an hour or two. At a poorly understood "Auteur Cinema" congress in Bogotá in 2014, I pointed out that most auteur cinema, highly valued by the Cannes Film Festival jury, which annually awards the dubious honour of "Un Certain Regard" to films boasting beautiful photography and deplorable narrative, was more appropriately directed at museum visitors than conventional cinema-goers: boring cinema for conventional cinephiles, beautiful for visual artists.

My diatribe was, as we have seen, assumed as praise by the director of *Post Tenebras Lux* (2012), who has since justified himself as a museum artist to his audience.

This type of cinema, which we might call "Museum Cinema," is designed to be contemplated seated, characterized by its immobility or "dead time," a term coined by critic André Bazin.

We also become more or less interested in a film according to our disposition. Boredom is the result of frustrated perception: a viewer finds the conflicts in a film too easy or too difficult to follow. Without a question mark, our senses atrophy. The viewer's frustration can stem from various sources, such as a predictable plot that offers no intellectual or emotional challenges, or an overly complex narrative that provides insufficient clues for comprehension.

Causes of Boredom

When a film fails to engage viewers emotionally or intellectually, disinterest and boredom result. This disconnection can be caused by several factors:

1. **Excessive Simplicity:** When conflicts are too predictable or lack depth, the viewer can quickly lose interest. This often happens in films with linear plots and no significant plot twists.
2. **Excessive Complexity:** Conversely, an overly complicated plot without a clear thread can leave the viewer feeling lost and disconnected. A lack of clarity in the narrative can make the audience feel overwhelmed and emotionally detached.
3. **Lack of Identification:** If characters are not well-developed or their motivations

are unclear, the audience may struggle to identify with them, reducing interest in the story.
4. **Inadequate Pacing:** The film's pacing also plays a crucial role. A pace that is too slow can make a film seem tedious, while a pace that is too fast can confuse the viewer.

Boredom in cinema occurs when the film fails to maintain a balance between simplicity and complexity or does not provide enough elements of interest to keep the viewer engaged with the story and characters.

Examples of Boring Films

1. *Sleep* (1963) directed by Andy Warhol, is perhaps the epitome of "Museum Cinema." This experimental film shows a man sleeping for over five hours. The lack of action and extreme monotony make it unsuitable for conventional cinema. *Sleep* is more a piece of conceptual art than a narrative film, designed to challenge viewers' expectations and explore the limits of cinema as a medium. While interesting from an artistic and theoretical perspective, its capacity to bore the audience is undeniable.
2. *A Cidade Branca* (1983) directed by Alain Tanner, follows Paul, a Swiss sailor who decides to abandon his ship and lose himself in the streets of Lisbon. The film focuses on his daily life and inner reflections while exploring the city. The narrative is introspective, focusing on themes of loneliness and self-discovery. While the film offers a poetic and contemplative look at urban life and alienation, its slow pace and lack of a defined plot can be tedious. The film relies heavily on atmosphere and urban landscape, which may fascinate museum-goers but challenge those who prefer a more structured and dynamic narrative.
3. *Quantum of Solace* (2008), one of the most criticized James Bond films, is a clear example. The film presents a series of conflicts that are not clearly related, making it difficult for the viewer to maintain interest. The lack of a coherent narrative based on causality makes the plot confusing and disconnected, leading to an unsatisfying cinematic experience. In *Quantum of Solace*, viewers face multiple action scenes and character developments that lack a clear connection. For example, the villain's motivations are inadequately explained, and the jumps between different locations and situations seem arbitrary. This lack of a robust causal structure prevents the audience from emotionally engaging as they cannot understand the relationships between events.
4. *Post Tenebras Lux* (2012) by Carlos Reygadas is notorious for its fragmented narrative structure. The film follows the life of Juan and his family in rural Mexico, mixing autobiographical elements with surreal and dreamlike scenes. The non-linear narrative and lack of a coherent plot make the film incomprehensible. Though admired by some critics, the film is widely criticized for its slow pace and focus on disconnected scenes that do not contribute to a clear narrative. The resulting emotional disconnection and lack of a solid thread make it more suitable for a museum environment, assuming there is a curator with an appreciation for such banal scenes.
5. *Tabu* (2012) directed by Miguel Gomes, is a film divided into two parts. The first part, "Paradise Lost," is set in contemporary Lisbon and follows the life of an elderly

woman, her maid, and her neighbour. The second part, "Paradise," is a black-and-white narrative of a love and adventure story in Africa before the colonial revolution. The non-linear structure and stylistic change between the two parts of the film confuse viewers. *Tabu* plays with time and memory, using symbolism and surrealism to tell its story. Although praised for its originality and visual beauty, its complex narrative and focus on symbolism make it difficult to follow and boring for those seeking a coherent story. The lack of a clear causal narrative fosters emotional disconnection and a less satisfying experience for the general audience.

6. *O Gebo e a Sombra* (2012) directed by the legendary Manoel de Oliveira, is an adaptation of a play by Raul Brandão. The film centres on Gebo, an elderly accountant living in poverty with his wife Doroteia and daughter-in-law Sofia. The plot explores themes of honesty, integrity, and life's struggles through long conversations and a dry staging. The film is praised for its performances and criticized for its slow pace and focus on long, static dialogues. The lack of action and intense focus on dialogues make it unbearable for conventional cinephiles. The film is more of a contemplative art piece than a conventional narrative, making it more suitable for a museum setting than a commercial cinema screening.

7. *Cavalo Dinheiro* (2014) directed by Pedro Costa, stands out for its visual style and focus on the lives of marginalized individuals. The plot follows Ventura, a Cape Verdean immigrant in Portugal, as he wanders through a hospital and his memories, reflecting on his life and past. The narrative is fragmented and non-linear, presented more as a series of vignettes or dreamlike scenes than a traditional story. While lauded for its cinematography and ability to capture an atmosphere of oppression and desolation, it is criticized for its extremely slow pace and lack of a clear and coherent plot. Many viewers find it difficult to emotionally connect with the characters due to the lack of dialogue and action. Costa's focus on creating a visual and emotional experience often leaves narrative development aside, resulting in a perception of disconnection and boredom for the general audience.

4. Waving Conflicts in editing

Outcome of the conflicts

From a narrative outcome point of view, conflicts can be closed, cryptic or open.

Closed Conflicts

Closed conflicts have a beginning, development, and sequential resolution. Closed conflicts are satisfying; they meet the imperatives of our understanding. A mystery is formulated and, as the plot progresses, the audience experiences a variety of emotions. Timely resolution frees viewers from the burden of doubt. Aristotle, who accurately understood the hedonistic nature of conflict, reduced drama to the representation of a single closed conflict:

> "Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is complete, whole, and of a certain magnitude[14]."

In *La Ciociara* (Two Women, De Sica, 1960), the plot follows Cesira (Sophia Loren) and her daughter Rosetta as they flee Rome during World War II to seek refuge in their hometown in the Ciociaria region. Along their journey, they face various dangers and hardships, but the main conflict intensifies when, in a moment of apparent safety, they are both brutally raped by Moroccan soldiers in a church. This traumatic event marks a turning point in the narrative, irrevocably changing the lives of mother and daughter and leading the story to its conclusion.

In *Vredens Dag* (Day of Wrath, Dreyer, 1943), Anne, a young wife of an elderly pastor, falls in love with her stepson Martin. This forbidden love develops in a context of superstition and witchcraft accusations in a small 17th-century Danish community. After her husband's death, Anne is accused of witchcraft by the community. The tension increases as the suspicions and fears of the villagers are revealed, culminating in Anne's coerced confession and her death sentence. This conflict, based on superstition and religious fanaticism, follows a clear path to its tragic conclusion.

In *El Último Tango de París (Last Tango in Paris, Bertolucci*, 1972) the plot focuses on Paul (Marlon Brando), a middle-aged American man who, after the suicide of his wife, finds himself in a state of deep despair. In Paris, he begins an anonymous and passionate sexual relationship with Jeanne (Maria Schneider), a young Parisian woman. The relationship, marked by emotional intensity and lack of personal communication, develops until Jeanne decides to end it. In an act of desperation, Paul tries to convince her to continue, but she rejects him and, in a tragic twist, kills him in a moment of panic. This ending brings closure to Paul's internal conflict and his search for meaning in the midst of pain.

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14 Aristotle. (1997). Poetics (S. H. Butcher, Trans.). vii.

As I mentioned before, single conflicts without sub-conflicts barely last ten minutes. With a single conflict, Aristotle longed for a unity that no tragedy, not even Oedipus the King, satisfactorily fulfils.

Any play is a network of conflicts of greater or lesser importance. Therefore, the playwright or screenwriter is forced to create new conflicts. The intertwining of these conflicts consolidates the structure of a play or film script.

The Closed Conflicts of Psycho (Hitchcock, 1960)

Based on a short novel by Robert Bloch, Alfred Hitchcock masterfully wove two main closed conflicts in *Psycho* (1960).

The chronological structure of the script increases the dramatic tension. Joseph Stefano turned Robert Bloch's discontinuous narrative into a relentless survival story:

> "When I first met with Hitchcock I pitched that whole opening sequence of the movie, the first 25 minutes or so. My idea was to base the film around the character of Marion Crane—you like her, you want her to get away from the highway patrol, you want her to steal the money, and then take it back[15]."

While the first chapter of the novel narrates the conflictual relationship between Norman Bates and his mother, Stefano begins with a frantic urban landscape:

FADE IN
EXT. PHOENIX, ARIZONA — (DAY) — HELICOPTER SHOT

Over the downtown section of the city. It is early afternoon, a hot mid-summer day. The city is blanched by the sun and the sound of its traffic is muted in its own echoes. We fly low, heading in toward the centre, passing over traffic-clogged streets, white business buildings, neatly patterned residential districts. As we get closer to the downtown section, the character of the city begins to change. It is darker and older, worn by time and industry. We see railroad tracks, smokestacks, wholesale fruit and vegetable markets, old municipal buildings, vacant lots. The very geography seems to offer us a climate of evil, of darkness, of ominous and of foreboding.

We fly lower and faster now, as if seeking out a specific location. An old, high, narrow hotel comes into view… We advance determinedly toward a particular window...

15 Stefan, J. (1999, October 15). Entrevista con Marc Savlov. The Austin Chronicle.

	Conflict I *Marion Crane*	**Conflict II** *Norman Bates*
Cause	Marion steals $40,000 in Phoenix, Arizona	Norman protects her dominant mother
Event	She tries to escape to California	His mother murders a woman
Aftermath	She is murdered	Norman is caught

Anticipating Norman Bates' voyeuristic tendencies, the viewer is introduced to a small hotel room where Mary Crane and Sam Lewis discuss their future.

Pressed by financial difficulties, she succumbs to the temptation of forty thousand dollars entrusted to her boss by a client. For about forty minutes, we accompany Mary in her desperate escape to California.

After a series of paranoid encounters with a highway patrol officer, she stops for the night at an isolated motel run by Norman Bates, a nervous young man dominated by his decrepit mother. Minutes later, she is stabbed to death with a knife.

Robert Bloch introduces Marion Crane in the second chapter of his novel:

> "The rain had been falling steadily for several minutes before Mary noticed it and switched on the windshield wiper… The worst part had come yesterday afternoon, when she stole the money[16]."

While the reader reconstructs the story through flashbacks, coincidences, and memories, Hitchcock's viewers are forced to chronologically experience her agony and death.

Since Marion's murderer's identity is only revealed at the end of the film, *Psycho* premiered with strict instructions not to allow anyone to enter the theatre after the show had started. The elaborate narrative of closed conflicts in *Psycho* led Hitchcock himself to describe his masterpiece as 'using pure cinema to cause emotions in the audience.'

A closed conflict presented in a non-linear sequence is a cryptic conflict. As ordinary perception is challenged, the viewer gathers scattered pieces of information, reorganizing them in their mind according to a chronological principle of beginning, middle, and end.

Bertolucci employs a cryptic conflict in *1900* (1976) to question the moral and

16 Bloch, Robert, Psycho, p. 13 - 14.

cultural sympathies of the viewer.

The film begins with the massacre of a couple by a group of peasants. What appears to be an act of injustice slowly becomes an act of revenge, culturally justified by the abuses perpetrated by the man embodied by Donald Sutherland.

Cryptic Conflicts

Cryptic conflicts in cinema introduce ambiguity, complexity, and layers of meaning not immediately apparent to the audience. These conflicts rely on the interplay between time and perception, creating a multifaceted storytelling experience that transcends straightforward plot development. Cryptic conflicts can be classified into two main categories (Artificial and Descriptive) based on their reliance on either the time-image or the movement-image.

Time-Image vs. Movement-Image

Time-Image: The time-image is a concept coined by Gilles Deleuze, emphasizing the non-linear, non-chronological representation of time in cinema. It reflects the subjective experience of time, often presenting events out of sequence or in a fragmented manner.

Films like *Simon of the Desert* (1965) by Luis Buñuel and *Eternity and a Day* (1998) by Theo Angelopoulos exemplify the time-image. These films create a dreamlike, almost surreal atmosphere where the perception of time is fluid and non-linear. The time-image allows filmmakers to explore themes of memory, identity, and existentialism, presenting reality as cryptic and multifaceted. The time-image is not artificial; it attempts to describe the human psyche as imperfect as it is. Humans change their remembrances according to their imagination and traumas.

Time-Image films use cryptic narratives to reflect the complexity of human perception and reality. These films embrace the idea that our understanding of the world is inherently cryptic and layered. The sequences in these films are often vague and doubtful, based on the remembrances of several characters, creating a rich and enigmatic narrative.

An important example of the Time-image films is *Mirror* (1975) by Andrei Tarkovsky, a collection of memories, dreams, and historical footage, woven together to explore themes of memory, family, and identity. Tarkovsky's use of the time-image creates a cryptic narrative that reflects the fragmented nature of human consciousness. The film presents a tapestry of experiences that reflect the protagonist's inner life and historical context, using non-linear structure and poetic imagery to convey the elusive nature of memory and identity.

Last Year at Marienbad (1961) by Alain Resnais uses a cryptic narrative to reflect the complexity of human perception and reality. The film embraces the idea that our understanding of the world is inherently cryptic and layered. The main character cannot remember if he met the girl of the story or if she was someone else, creating a sense of uncertainty and ambiguity.

Movement-Image: The movement-image, another Deleuzian concept, focuses on the linear progression of events driven by cause and effect. It is more conventional, often used in mainstream cinema to create tension and resolve conflicts. Movement-action

cryptic films employ an artificial structure, where the narrative is fragmented and non-linear, primarily to create an artificial tension. This approach is subjective to the screenwriter and director, aiming to craft a unique viewing experience. Films like *High Noon* (1952) by Fred Zinnemann and *The Ten Commandments* (1956) by Cecil B. DeMille demonstrate the straightforward movement-image approach, where the narrative drives forward in a linear, cause-and-effect manner.

Movement-image cryptic films such as *Pulp Fiction* (1994) present a disjointed narrative for technical reasons. Thus, they expect to keep their audience engaged while emphasizing the interconnectedness of the characters' stories. The proof of its artificiality is that *Pulp Fiction*, as a movement-action film celebrated by critics, can be edited chronologically without losing its dramatic impact, as the sequences present the only possible sequences of a unique reality.

Similarly, *Irreversible* (2002), directed by Gaspar Noé, uses a reverse chronological structure to create a cryptic conflict. The film begins with the brutal consequences of an event and moves backward to reveal the causes. This non-linear narrative is technically driven to enhance the emotional impact and tension, making the audience piece together the story's events. Despite its unconventional structure, the film can be re-edited into a chronological order, retaining its dramatic intensity, thus highlighting its artificial narrative construction.

The Red Violin (Girard, 1998) traces the journey of a violin through several centuries and owners, each segment revealing a new chapter in the instrument's history. The cryptic storytelling and thematic exploration of art, fate, and legacy create a rich and enigmatic narrative.

The Sweet Hereafter (1997) by Atom Egoyan explores the aftermath of a school bus accident in a small town, focusing on the perspectives of the survivors and the lawyer who arrives to investigate. The film's cryptic structure and thematic depth create a poignant and complex portrayal of grief, loss, and community.

Citizen Kane's Cryptic Main Conflict

The most celebrated cryptic conflict in cinema history was devised by Orson Welles in *Citizen Kane* (1941).

A magnate dies, murmuring the word "rosebud." A chronological newsreel about his life is projected in a small room. The newsreel director, visibly dissatisfied with his work, orders one of his reporters to discover the relationship between "rosebud" and Kane. He believes that solving this enigma will reveal Kane's identity. As the rest of the film progresses, the audience reconstructs Kane's life based on the memories of five people who knew him closely.

Although the reporter confesses his failure at the end of the film, a panoramic camera shot reveals the answer to the audience. While we watch the destruction of Kane's old furniture, we recognize the sled he had used as a child. The sled is thrown into the furnace, and the camera captures for a few seconds a word painted on its side: "Rosebud."

The complexity of *Citizen Kane* contrasts with the structural approach of contemporary cinema. Unlike films like *Pulp Fiction* and *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, which can be edited chronologically without losing their dramatic impact, *Citizen Kane* relies on the vagueness and doubtfulness of the sequences based on the

remembrances of several characters, all of them with reasons to hate Kane. This creates a rich and enigmatic narrative that reflects the complexity of human perception and reality.

By applying cryptic conflicts to either the time-image or the movement-image, filmmakers can create narratives that challenge the audience's perceptions and invite deeper reflection on the nature of reality, memory, and identity.

Open Conflicts

A prominent student of Kuleshov and Meyerhold, Sergei Eisenstein, formulated his own editing principles in 1924. The "Montage of Attractions" juxtaposes non-chronological images to produce a psychological impact.

Anticipating the open manifestations of cinema, Eisenstein replaces the rigid laws of visual continuity with the almost unexplored principle of associative imagery. A famous sequence in *October* (1928) juxtaposes images of Aleksandr Kerensky and a mechanical peacock. The head and open tail of the automaton, interspersed with Kerensky's tottering in the Winter Palace, produce one of cinema's most fortunate metaphors for bureaucracy. Despite its originality, *October* was received coldly by the Soviet intelligentsia. By directing a subjective, abstract, and intellectual film, Eisenstein refuted the propaganda achievements of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925).

However, Eisenstein's cinema is a moderate example of his theory. The juxtaposition of a bird and a uniformed man is not didactic but rather metaphorical. It is true that by dissociating perception from understanding, viewers are forced to reflect on the political conditions of pre-communist Russia, but their reflection is predetermined by parody, by Kerensky's exaggerated gait. Working under the strict creed of communism, Eisenstein could barely caricature the main characters in his films.

In Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir and wait for Godot to appear on an uncertain date. At the end of the first act, when it becomes clear that Godot is not coming, they question Godot's intentions and his very existence.

Unresolved enigmas are open conflicts, because they are open to diverse and often opposing interpretations:

> "I think a good film is one that has a lasting power. That you start to reconstruct of deconstruct in your head when you leave the cinema[17]."

The screenwriter deliberately hides or blurs the main event of a given conflict, or its causes and/or effects. *Le Chien Andalou* (An Andalusian Dog, 1929) by Buñuel offers divergent interpretations. The scene of a man dragging a piano, two decrepit donkeys, and a pair of priests with a rope has been understood as a metaphor for the burden of morality, but also as a parable of the boredom generated by an absent morality.

The main characters of *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* (Last Year at Marienbad, 1961) by Alain Resnais are, like the comic characters in Ionesco's play "The Bald Soprano,"

17 In Iranian Cinema. English broadcast by ITV, 06/30/02. Produced and directed by Susan Shaw.

unable to recognize each other. Alain Robbe-Grillet deliberately undermined the comprehensibility of his script to emphasize uncertainty:

> "The viewer who seeks to build a 'Cartesian' scheme, the more linear, the more rational; This viewer will find this film difficult... But if you let yourself be carried away by the extraordinary images you see, by the voices of the actors, by the noises, by the music, by the rhythm of the montage... you will find the story most faithful to reality[18]."

In spite of his great contributions to film theory, Deleuze saw each dramatic construction as the representation of a single action. He did not recognize each drama as a blend of conflicts, of many actions. While screenwriters weave open, cryptic, and/or closed conflicts in a script, any absolute categorization of cinema will prove deficient.

Active and Passive Conflicts

From a phenomenic perspective, conflicts in narratives can be classified as either active or passive. This classification helps to understand the dynamic nature of conflicts and how they drive the narrative forward.

All cryptic and open conflicts are passive.

Closed conflicts can be passive or active.

Active Conflicts

The popularity of directors like Buñuel and Kurosawa is based on their ability to devise both passive and active conflicts within a film.

Active conflicts are iconic and, as such, primarily appeal to our senses, such as the rape sequence in *Viridiana* (1961) by Buñuel, or the final battle in *Shichinin no samurai* (Seven Samurai, 1954) by Kurosawa.

Active conflicts are those that involve direct, immediate action and confrontation. These conflicts typically occur in narratives where characters engage in physical or verbal battles, pursue clear goals, and encounter obstacles that require immediate resolution. Active conflicts are often characterized by their high energy, clear stakes, and intense emotional engagement.

Examples of active conflicts include:

1. **Action Films**: In films like *Die Hard* (1988) or *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), characters are constantly engaged in physical confrontations, chases, and battles that drive the plot forward.
2. **Thrillers**: In thrillers like *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) or *Seven* (1995), the protagonists are actively pursuing villains, unravelling mysteries, and confronting danger head-on.

Commercial cinema recreates active conflicts. Its main themes are money, violence, and sex within the sacred framework of the family. Rape, revenge, and gain are met with

18 Alain Robbe-Grillet, L'année Dernière à Marienband (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1961), p. 17.

rejection, death, and defeat. Their variations are predictable: a man or a family must punish their enemy, a young man must win a sports contest, a hygienic model must seduce a thin girl.

They are popularly recognized as happy or sad: happy when they fit their predictability, that is, when the hero or the family succeeds; sad when they do not.

Commercial cinema often serves the purpose of mindless entertainment, captivating audiences with heroic feats, thrilling chases, and family conflicts. Viewers are drawn to acts of survival that rationalize the selfishness and violence of the main characters. The main focus becomes the hero's salvation, eclipsing considerations of realism or ideology. As observed by Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami:

> "There are films that nail you to your seat and overwhelm you to the point that you forget about everything. Then you feel cheated[19]."

Bertolt Brecht longed for theatre audiences to be able to dissociate their ideas from the pleasant illusions of a play. The average viewer is, in fact, a victim of repetition. Their senses are dulled by commercial film production and daily television reality shows.

> "Serious art has been withheld from those for whom the hardship and oppression of life make a mockery of seriousness, and who must be glad if they can use time no spent at the production line just to keep going[20]."

Passive Conflicts

Passive conflicts, on the other hand, are more introspective and subtle. They are indexical systems or symbolic systems, and as such, they primarily appeal to our intellect. They rely heavily on words, as in most adaptations of theatre plays such as *The King's Speech* (2010, Hopper).

These conflicts often involve internal struggles, psychological battles, or moral dilemmas that do not require immediate physical action. Passive conflicts are characterized by their focus on character development, emotional depth, and the gradual unfolding of complex themes.

Examples of passive conflicts include:

1. **Psychological Dramas**: In films like *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) or *Black Swan* (2010), the main conflict revolves around the characters' internal battles with their own minds, perceptions, and emotions.
2. **Character Studies**: In character-driven narratives like *Lost in Translation* (2003) or *Her* (2013), the conflicts are subtle and revolve around the characters' relationships, personal growth, and existential questions.

Passive conflicts require the active participation of the spectator. They often

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19 In Iranian Cinema. English broadcast by ITV, 06/30/02. Produced and directed by Susan Shaw.

20 Adorno and Horkheimer, Dialektik der Aufklarung (Dialectic of Enlightenment), tr. John Cumming (London: Verso, 1973) p. 135.

require viewers to have a fair knowledge of the symbolic systems of cinema, although references to works of art and literature are not uncommon.

Icons can also fall into this category, for example, the postcard sequence in *Le Fantôme de la liberté* (The Phantom of Liberty, 1974) by Buñuel, or the crime story in *Rashomon* (1950) by Kurosawa.

All cryptic and open conflicts are inherently passive. They involve deeper layers of meaning, ambiguity, and interpretation that do not necessarily lead to direct action but rather provoke thought, reflection, and emotional resonance.

1. **Cryptic Conflicts**: As seen in films like *Mirror* (1975) by Andrei Tarkovsky or *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) by Alain Resnais, these conflicts are elusive, multifaceted, and rely on the subjective experiences and memories of the characters. The audience is invited to piece together the narrative and derive meaning from the fragmented and non-linear storytelling.
2. **Open Conflicts**: In works like *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett or *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* (1961), the conflicts remain unresolved, open to multiple interpretations. These narratives emphasize the uncertainties and ambiguities of human existence, leaving the audience to grapple with unanswered questions and deeper philosophical inquiries.

Narrative and documentary films, rather than being a mere succession of conflicts, intricately weave a fabric of dramatic conflicts. The arrangement of these conflicts shapes the structure of the film, similar to the scaffolding of an imaginary building or the exoskeleton of an insect or a crab.

This interconnection extends to the aesthetics of Direct Cinema, exemplified by Frederick Wiseman's *Titicut Follies* (1967), which exposes the nightmare world of the Bridgewater Correctional Institution. We will return to the topic of documentary in the last chapter of this book.

Closed Conflicts as Active or Passive

Closed conflicts, depending on their nature, can be either active or passive.

Active Closed Conflicts

Active closed conflicts involve clear, decisive actions and resolutions. These conflicts are driven by direct confrontations and definitive outcomes. An excellent example of active closed conflicts is found in the *James Bond* films.

In the *James Bond* series, spanning from *Dr. No* (1962) to *No Time to Die* (2021), the narrative typically follows a pattern of direct confrontation with villains, culminating in decisive showdowns. In particular, *Goldfinger* (1964) exemplifies this structure:

1. **Conflict Introduction**: James Bond is assigned to investigate Auric Goldfinger, a wealthy and nefarious businessman suspected of smuggling gold.
2. **Conflict Development**: Bond uncovers Goldfinger's plan to contaminate the United States Bullion Depository at Fort Knox to increase the value of his own gold.
3. **Conflict Resolution**: Bond confronts Goldfinger and his henchmen in a series of action-packed sequences, ultimately thwarting the plot and saving Fort Knox. The film concludes with a clear resolution, as Bond emerges victorious, and the

immediate threat is neutralized.

This pattern of action and resolution is consistent throughout the James Bond franchise, where the protagonist's active engagement in conflict drives the narrative forward.

Passive Closed Conflicts

Passive closed conflicts involve internal resolutions or subtle shifts in characters' perceptions and emotions. These conflicts are characterized by their introspective nature and often leave a lasting impact through the profound themes they explore.

All classical theatre plays that make use of closed conflicts are passive by virtue of their dialectics, of the questions they raise about existence, social life, and metaphysics. From Aeschylus and Aristophanes to García Lorca and Harold Pinter, the power of their verses and sentences hovers in our minds for decades. As Peter Brook points out about the final sentence of *King Lear*, nobody can explain it satisfactorily, and it will continue haunting generations forever:

> *The oldest hath borne most: we that are young.*
> *Shall never see so much, nor live so long.*

Brook's insights (1990) reflect the enduring and multifaceted nature of Shakespeare's work. The final lines of *King Lear* encapsulate the immense suffering experienced by the characters, particularly Edgar, who reflects on the unparalleled hardships faced by those who have endured much.

Personally, I see in it the knowledge of suffering that Shakespeare had acquired. These verses can be explained in light of a passage written by Van Gogh to his brother Theo, where he says that he is not interested in such and such a beautiful girl he praised to him, for he is only interested in women who have really experienced life's adversities.

In classical theatre, the conflicts often revolve around existential questions and moral dilemmas that do not resolve through direct action but through introspection and reflection. The passive nature of these conflicts allows for a deep exploration of human nature and societal issues, leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

Hegel's definition of art as the sensible representation of the idea, is particularly felt in the tapestry of poetry; until now nobody has been able to deciphered what was the future of the main character of Ibsen's "Doll's House", or what does "Rosebud" mean for Charles Foster Kane

This active and passive closed conflicts framework highlights how action-driven and introspective resolutions contribute to the richness and complexity of storytelling.

Scaffolding of Conflicts

From a structural point of view, films can be classified as organic, repetitive, episodic, or disjunctive.

Organic Scaffolding

An organic film integrates sub-conflicts that contribute to the resolution of the

main conflict. Horror films, science fiction, melodramas, and epics are genres that cinema imported from 19th-century literature, as noted by Eisenstein. While each summer we are informed about new blockbusters with never-before-seen special effects, producers are well aware that the success of a film depends on the quality of the script, designed according to the blueprints of organic narrative.

Car Analogy Applied to "El Chavo del Ocho"

Chespirito, the most famous Hispanic screenwriter, whose name translates to Little Shakespeare, was an engineer who used to organize sub-conflicts the same way an engineer organizes a car's parts around an engine. To understand this analogy, we will break down each component of the car and relate it to the narrative elements of the globally distributed TV series "El Chavo del Ocho."

1. **The Engine (Main Conflict)**

In a car, the engine is the heart of the system, providing the necessary energy for the vehicle to operate. In "El Chavo del Ocho," the main conflict is the engine of the series, driving each episode and maintaining audience interest. Example: The mischief and adventures of El Chavo, and his struggle to find his place in the neighbourhood, are the engine that drives each episode. The main conflict is El Chavo's daily survival in a challenging environment.

2. **Ignition (Story Start)**

The ignition is what starts the engine. In an episode of "El Chavo del Ocho," this corresponds to the story's start, where characters and the episode's main conflict are introduced. Example: The arrival of a new problem or mischief by El Chavo, such as when he tries to get food or gets into trouble, starts the episode's action.

3. **Gear Shifts (Development and Sub-Conflicts)**

Gear shifts allow adjusting the car's power and speed according to the terrain's needs. In "El Chavo del Ocho," sub-conflicts act as gear shifts, adding complexity and adjusting the story's pace. Example: Sub-conflicts between Doña Florinda and Don Ramón, such as their constant fights and reconciliations, add humour and tension. The rivalry and friendship between Quico and El Chavo provide moments of conflict and camaraderie. Señor Barriga's insistence on collecting rent creates an economic conflict that adds a layer of realism.

4. **Turns (Narrative Twists)**

Turns represent the changes in the path a driver must take. In "El Chavo del Ocho," narrative twists are the moments of surprise or change of direction in the plot. Example: A narrative twist occurs when a plan of El Chavo unexpectedly goes wrong, such as when he tries to do something good but causes a disaster. Another example is when a character reveals surprising information that changes the situation's dynamics.

5. **The Accident (Pathetic Incident)**

An accident in the context of a car is an unexpected and potentially disastrous event. In "El Chavo del Ocho," the accident is the climax of the conflict, where tensions reach their peak. Example: The climax can be a confrontation between characters, such as when Doña Florinda hits Don Ramón due to a misunderstanding or when El Chavo

unintentionally causes chaos in the neighbourhood.

6. **Resolution (Conclusion)**

After an accident, a car must be repaired and restored to its functional state. In a narrative, the resolution is the conclusion where conflicts are resolved, and the story reaches its end.

The Maltese Falcon (John Huston, 1941)

Example: In "El Chavo del Ocho," the resolution generally involves a reconciliation or return to normalcy in the neighbourhood. The characters may forgive each other, and El Chavo usually ends up having learned a lesson or in a comedic situation suggesting that the mischief will continue.

Chespirito's technique of organizing sub-conflicts as an engineer organizes a car's parts around an engine is an excellent way to create organic and cohesive narratives. In "El Chavo del Ocho," each sub-conflict and secondary character has a clear purpose and contributes to the development of the main conflict, keeping the audience engaged and interested. This structure ensures that all elements of the story work together harmoniously, creating a rich and entertaining narrative experience.

The Maltese Falcon (John Huston, 1941)

The Maltese Falcon (John Huston, 1941), based on the novel of the same name by Dashiell Hammett, is a classic example of a film with an organic narrative structure. The story follows private detective Sam Spade, played by Humphrey Bogart, as he becomes entangled in a web of deception, betrayal, and murder surrounding the search for a valuable statuette: the Maltese Falcon.

Act 1: The film begins by introducing Sam Spade and his partner, Miles Archer, in their private detective office in San Francisco. A woman named Ruth Wonderly (later revealed as Brigid O'Shaughnessy) hires them to follow a man named Floyd Thursby. That same night, Archer is killed while following Thursby, and shortly after, Thursby is also found dead. The police suspect Spade due to his relationship with Archer and his possible interest in Archer's wife, Iva.

Act 2: Spade decides to investigate on his own and discovers that Brigid has lied about her identity and motives. She confesses that she is involved in the search for the Maltese Falcon, a valuable statuette stolen centuries ago. Spade encounters other characters equally interested in the Falcon: Joel Cairo, Kasper Gutman (also known as "The Fat Man"), and Wilmer, Gutman's bodyguard. Each of these characters introduces new sub-conflicts and complications to the main plot.

- **Joel Cairo:** Cairo tries to bribe Spade to find the Falcon and later threatens him at gunpoint, creating a conflict of loyalties and direct threats.
- **Kasper Gutman:** Gutman offers Spade a large sum of money for the Falcon but also shows his willingness to use violence to get it. This introduces a sub-conflict of power and greed.
- **Wilmer:** Wilmer, as Gutman's henchman, adds an element of constant physical danger for Spade.

Act 3: The plot intensifies as Spade negotiates with all the interested parties in the

Falcon. In a series of deceptions and revelations, Spade manages to get hold of the Falcon, only to discover that it is a forgery. The resolution of the sub-conflicts occurs when Spade decides to turn Brigid over to the police for her involvement in the murders of Archer and Thursby, despite his feelings for her. Gutman and Cairo plan to continue their search for the real Falcon, but the police arrest Wilmer, and Spade is cleared of the charges.

The organic structure of *The Maltese Falcon* is evident in the way sub-conflicts intertwine with the main plot of the Maltese Falcon mystery. Each character and subplot is intrinsically linked to the central conflict, enriching the narrative and providing solidity to the story. Here are some key aspects of this structure:

1. **Interconnection of characters:** All the main characters are linked by their interest in the Maltese Falcon. Their personal motivations and direct actions affect the development of the main plot.
2. **Thematic development:** The sub-conflicts address themes of greed, loyalty, betrayal, and morality, all central to the main conflict. The search for the Falcon becomes a metaphor for these broader themes.
3. **Natural progression:** The events of the film progress logically and coherently, with each sub-conflict adding new layers of complexity. The actions and decisions of the characters are motivated by their objectives related to the Falcon, which keeps the narrative cohesive.
4. **Integrated resolution:** The resolution of the sub-conflicts contributes to the resolution of the main conflict. Spade's decision to turn Brigid over to the police not only resolves the mystery of the Falcon but also the moral and personal dilemmas he has faced throughout the film.

The Maltese Falcon exemplifies an organic narrative by weaving sub-conflicts that enrich and complement the central mystery, creating a complex and cohesive plot that keeps the viewer engaged from beginning to end.

Death of a Salesman (Schlöndorff, 1985)

Arthur Miller, one of the most prominent playwrights of the 20th century, is known for his works filled with emotion in seemingly unemotional settings. His play *Death of a Salesman* is an excellent example of organic narrative, where sub-conflicts and secondary characters are intrinsically linked to the main conflict, creating a rich and moving plot.

Act 1: The film begins by presenting Willy Loman, a traveling salesman facing the reality of his professional and personal failures. The main conflict revolves around his struggle to find success and recognition in a capitalist world that has left him behind.

Act 2: Willy's relationship with his family introduces several sub-conflicts that enrich the main plot. His relationship with his wife, Linda, reflects a constant love but strained by Willy's expectations and failures. His sons, Biff and Happy, represent Willy's hopes and disappointments. Biff, in particular, is the focus of a significant sub-conflict, as his rejection of following his father's path and his search for his own identity create constant tensions.

- **Linda and Willy:** Linda's patience and love for Willy, despite his failures,

introduce an emotional sub-conflict that underscores the protagonist's tragedy.

- **Biff and Willy:** The confrontation between Biff and Willy over the truth of their lives and personal failures is a central sub-conflict exploring themes of expectations, disillusionment, and redemption.
- **Happy and Willy:** Happy's attempt to gain his father's approval adds a sub-conflict of competition and desire for recognition.

Act 3: The story's climax occurs when Biff confronts Willy with the truth of their lives, leading to an emotional catharsis that reveals Willy's illusions and disappointments. The tragic resolution comes when Willy decides to sacrifice himself to provide a better life for his family through his life insurance.

The organic narrative of *Death of a Salesman* is evident in how each sub-conflict and character is intertwined with Willy Loman's main conflict. Themes of failure, disillusionment, and the impact of capitalism on individual identity are explored through family and personal relationships that enrich and deepen the central plot.

Dracula (Browning, 1930)

Dracula is one of the most iconic horror films. Based on Bram Stoker's novel and starring Bela Lugosi, the film marked the beginning of the popularity of vampire films in Hollywood and established Lugosi as the definitive Count Dracula for generations. Acclaimed for its gothic atmosphere and Lugosi's hypnotic performance, *Dracula* had a lasting impact on popular culture and the horror genre. Scholars and critics have praised the film for its innovative use of lighting and special effects, as well as its ability to create an atmosphere of unease and mystery.

Act 1: The film begins with Renfield arriving at Count Dracula's castle in Transylvania. The main conflict centres on the threat Dracula poses to London when he moves there.

Act 2: Sub-conflicts develop through the secondary characters affected by Dracula. Mina Seward and her fiancé Jonathan Harker are central to these sub-conflicts. Renfield's transformation into Dracula's servant adds another level of threat and tension.

- **Mina and Jonathan:** Mina and Jonathan's relationship is a key sub-conflict, as Mina's transformation into a victim of Dracula tests their love and bravery.
- **Renfield:** Renfield's struggle against Dracula's influence adds an internal sub-conflict that reflects the vampire's corrupting power.

Act 3: The climax comes when Van Helsing and Jonathan confront Dracula in his lair. The resolution occurs when they manage to destroy Dracula, saving Mina and restoring order.

The narrative of *Dracula* is organic in how the internal sub-conflicts between the crew reflect and amplify the main conflict with the Alien. The struggles for control, betrayal, and personal survival add layers of complexity to the central plot of the alien threat.

Alien (Scott, 1979)

Alien, directed by Ridley Scott in 1979, is a seminal film in the science fiction and

horror genres. Starring Sigourney Weaver as Officer Ellen Ripley, the film combines elements of horror and science fiction in a tense and claustrophobic narrative. *Alien* was acclaimed for its innovative production design, especially the creature created by H.R. Giger, and for its focus on a strong female protagonist. The film has been widely studied and analysed for its subtext of survival, feminism, and fear of the unknown, solidifying its status as a classic of cinema.

Act 1: The film begins with the crew of the Nostromo receiving a distress signal from an unknown planet. The main conflict arises when they discover the alien ship and the egg from which the Alien emerges.

Act 2: The sub-conflicts develop through the interactions and relationships between the crew members as they try to survive the Alien. Distrust and tensions increase when it is revealed that Ash, the science officer, has secret orders to bring the Alien back to Earth.

- Ripley and Ash: The confrontation between Ripley and Ash adds a sub-conflict of betrayal and distrust, revealing the internal threat in addition to the external one.
- Ripley and Parker/Brett: The tensions between Ripley and the engineers, Parker and Brett, over leadership and survival decisions add a sub-conflict that reflects the struggle for control.

Act 3: The climax comes when Ripley, the sole survivor, must face the Alien alone. The resolution occurs when she finally manages to eject the Alien into space.

The narrative of *Alien* is organic in how the internal sub-conflicts among the crew reflect and amplify the main conflict with the Alien. The struggles for control, betrayal, and personal survival add layers of complexity to the central plot of the alien threat.

Game of Thrones (HBO series)

Game of Thrones, the HBO series based on George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* novels, is one of the most influential and acclaimed series of modern television. Premiered in 2011, the series stood out for its complex narrative, multifaceted characters, and surprising plot twists. With a mix of fantasy, politics, and drama, *Game of Thrones* explored themes of power, betrayal, and redemption. The series has been the subject of numerous academic studies and has left a lasting legacy in popular culture.

Act 1: The series begins by introducing the noble houses of Westeros and their struggles for the Iron Throne. The main conflict centres on the fight for power and control of the Seven Kingdoms.

Act 2: Throughout the series, numerous sub-conflicts develop between the characters and houses, adding depth and complexity to the narrative. These include ***family*** rivalries, political betrayals, and personal conflicts.

- **Stark and Lannister:** The rivalry between the Stark and Lannister houses is a central sub-conflict driving much of the political plot.
- **Daenerys Targaryen:** Her quest to reclaim the Iron Throne introduces sub-conflicts with other houses and within her own circle of followers.
- **Jon Snow:** His struggle for identity and duty adds sub-conflicts related to loyalty and leadership.

- **The threat of the White Walkers:** Introduces a supernatural conflict that forces the houses to reconsider their priorities and alliances.

Act 3: Each season culminates in a climax that resolves some sub-conflicts while introducing new ones. The final resolution of the series includes the battle against the White Walkers and the conclusion of the fight for the Iron Throne.

The narrative of *Game of Thrones* is organic due to the way sub-conflicts and secondary characters are intertwined with the main conflict of the struggle for power. Themes of betrayal, loyalty, and ambition are explored through multiple character arcs, creating a rich and multifaceted narrative.

The Godfather (1972) by Francis Ford Coppola

The Godfather, directed by Francis Ford Coppola and based on the novel by Mario Puzo, is one of the most acclaimed and respected films in cinema history. Released in 1972, the film tells the story of the Corleone family, a powerful mafia family in the United States. With iconic performances by Marlon Brando and Al Pacino, *The Godfather* stands out for its masterful screenplay, impeccable direction, and deep exploration of themes like power, loyalty, and betrayal.

Act 1: The film begins with the introduction of the Corleone family during the wedding of Connie, Don Vito Corleone's daughter. The main conflict centres on power and succession within the mafia family.

Act 2: The sub-conflicts develop through relationships and loyalties within and outside the Corleone family. The betrayal by Sollozzo and the mafia war between families are key sub-conflicts.

Michael Corleone: His evolution from a reluctant civilian to a mafia leader introduces sub-conflicts of identity and morality.

Sonny Corleone: Sonny's impulsiveness adds a sub-conflict of leadership and strategy.

Tom Hagen: His role as consigliere introduces sub-conflicts of loyalty and duty.

Kay Adams: Her relationship with Michael adds a sub-conflict of love and loyalty.

Act 3: The climax arrives with the series of murders orchestrated by Michael to consolidate his power. The resolution comes when Michael becomes the new Don, ensuring succession and control of the family.

The narrative of *The Godfather* is organic in how the sub-conflicts and secondary characters are connected to the main conflict of power and succession in the Corleone family. Themes of betrayal, loyalty, and power are explored through the relationships and decisions of the characters, creating a cohesive and engaging plot.

These examples of organic films demonstrate how the narrative structure can be enriched through sub-conflicts and secondary characters that are intrinsically linked to the main conflict. This approach creates a cohesive, multifaceted narrative that keeps the viewer engaged and interested in every aspect of the story.

Iterative Scaffolding

A film is iterative when its conflicts are variations of a single conflict, such as in *Le Charme Discret de la Bourgeoisie* (1972) by Buñuel, where the high-class characters present variations of a meal. Iterative films adopt the narrative structure of a circus, where an act is presented repeatedly with infinite variations. Fellini is, in this sense, the most celebrated filmmaker of iterative cinema. Casanova's initial seductions become more daring and fantastic as they reincarnate in new cities. Most sports movies, road movies, adventure, and action films are iterative. The hero must face a series of obstacles, each more challenging than the last.

Le Charme Discret de la Bourgeoisie (Buñuel, 1972)

Le Charme Discret de la Bourgeoisie is a 1972 surrealist film directed by Luis Buñuel. The film follows a group of upper-class characters who repeatedly try to have dinner together, only to be thwarted by a series of strange and unusual events. The film is known for its biting critique of the bourgeoisie and its surrealist style that defies traditional narrative conventions.

Act 1: The film begins with a series of failed attempts by the main characters to gather and dine together. Each attempt is interrupted by unexpected circumstances, ranging from social misunderstandings to surreal events. For example, in one of the early scenes, the characters arrive at a restaurant only to discover it is closed because the owner has died, and his body is displayed in the dining room.

Act 2: Throughout the film, sub-conflicts develop through the characters' interactions and constant interruptions of their dinners. These sub-conflicts reflect the hypocrisies and absurdities of the upper class.

Social interruptions: The characters face a series of misunderstandings and social errors that reflect their disconnection and superficiality. In one scene, a lover of one of the diners claims to be a Colombian guerrilla, adding a layer of tension and surprise.

Surreal events: The interruptions include absurd and surreal events that add a layer of social and political commentary. For example, in one scene, soldiers invade the house during dinner, and at another moment, the dinner transforms into a theatre stage, revealing that the characters are being watched by an audience. In one of the most notable sequences, a bishop who joins the group kills his parents' murderer, who confesses to him before the act.

Act 3: The climax of the film is an accumulation of surreal events that repeatedly prevent the dinner from happening, without a clear resolution. The characters never manage to dine together, highlighting the futility and emptiness of their lives. The repetition of these failed attempts underscores the superficiality and pretensions of the bourgeoisie, while the surreal interruptions serve as biting commentary on society and politics.

The narrative of *Le Charme Discret de la Bourgeoisie* is iterative in its structure, with the same conflict of attempting to dine repeated in different variations. Each failed attempt is a variation of the same conflict, highlighting Buñuel's critique of the bourgeoisie and their superficial, repetitive lives. The iterative structure emphasizes the futility of their efforts and the lack of substance in their lives, using surrealism to intensify the social commentary.

Amarcord (Fellini, 1973)

Amarcord is a semi-autobiographical film from 1973 directed by Federico Fellini. The film is a series of vignettes depicting life in a small Italian town during the 1930s, seen through the eyes of a teenager. With its characteristic style and nostalgic approach, *Amarcord* is a celebration of everyday life and the eccentricities of the town's characters. The film has been praised for its lyrical narrative and rich visual style, and is considered one of Fellini's masterpieces.

Act 1: The film introduces the audience to life in the small town with a series of scenes that capture the festivities, daily routines, and colourful characters inhabiting the place. The central conflict revolves around the daily life of the teenage protagonist and his interactions with the town's inhabitants.

Act 2: The sub-conflicts develop through the interactions and events in the life of the town. Each scene is a vignette presenting a variation of the film's central conflict: life in the town and the experiences of the teenage protagonist.

Scenes of everyday life: Each scene presents a different aspect of town life, from the teenagers' antics to local festivities, capturing the essence of the place and its inhabitants. A notable example is the fascist parade scene, which showcases the town's political life in a satirical and critical manner.

Eccentric characters: The town's characters, with their quirks and eccentricities, add depth and variety to the repetitive scenes, reflecting the diversity of human life. Characters like the uncle who climbs a tree and shouts "I want a woman!" or the voluptuous tobacconist who provokes the young boys' fantasies.

Act 3: *Amarcord* doesn't have a traditional climax, as it follows an episodic and iterative structure. The resolution is found in the accumulation of experiences and moments that together paint a complete and nostalgic portrait of town life; Deleuze celebrated the dance of the young students, whose movements anticipate the kind of life they will lead in the future, from the most boring, the eternal bourgeois office worker, to the most disparate and creative in their movements, the same alter-ego of Fellini. The film ends with the arrival of spring, symbolizing the continuous cycle of life, as in the Dionysian festivals of ancient Greece.

The narrative of *Amarcord* is iterative in its episodic structure, with each vignette functioning as a variation of the central conflict: life in the town. The repetition of themes and everyday scenes highlights the cyclical and repetitive nature of life, while celebrating its richness and variety. The iterative structure allows Fellini to explore different aspects of town life and characters without constraints, creating a rich and multifaceted narrative.

Groundhog Day (Ramis, 1993)

Groundhog Day is a 1993 comedy directed by Harold Ramis and starring Bill Murray as Phil Connors, a weatherman who finds himself trapped in a time loop, reliving the same day over and over. The film has been acclaimed for its ingenious script, Murray's lead performance, and its exploration of philosophical and existential themes. It has been widely analysed in terms of its narrative structure and cultural impact.

Act 1: The film begins with Phil Connors covering the annual Groundhog Day event in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Initially, Phil is a cynical and selfish man who despises the town and its inhabitants.

Act 2: Development of sub-conflicts As Phil begins to realize that he is trapped in a time loop, he experiences a series of sub-conflicts that reflect his personal growth and struggle to find meaning in his situation.

Acceptance of the loop: Initially, Phil uses the loop for his selfish benefits, such as obtaining money and seducing women. This sub-conflict reflects his struggle with accepting his situation.

Desperation and nihilism: Phil goes through a phase of desperation and nihilism, repeatedly attempting suicide only to wake up to the same day. This sub-conflict adds depth to his internal struggle and eventual growth.

Redemption and self-improvement: Finally, Phil decides to use the infinite time to better himself and help others, learning new skills and creating genuine connections. This sub-conflict is key to his redemption and eventual breaking of the loop.

Act 3: The climax of the film arrives when Phil has completely transformed his attitude and actions. The resolution occurs when he finally wakes up to the next day, having broken the time loop by becoming a better person.

The narrative of *Groundhog Day* is iterative by nature, with the same day repeating constantly. Each repetition of the day presents a variation of the same conflict, allowing Phil to explore different aspects of his life and personality. The iterative structure highlights personal growth and redemption, showing how incremental changes and improvements can lead to complete transformation.

Rocky (Avildsen, 1976)

Rocky is a 1976 sports film directed by John G. Avildsen and starring Sylvester Stallone, who also wrote the screenplay. The film tells the story of Rocky Balboa, a working-class boxer who gets a shot at the world heavyweight championship against Apollo Creed. *Rocky* was a critical and commercial success, winning three Oscars, including Best Picture, and launching a lasting franchise.

Act 1: The film introduces Rocky Balboa as a small-time boxer struggling to make a living in Philadelphia. The main conflict is presented when Rocky is chosen to fight Apollo Creed, who is looking for an unexpected opponent for his next fight.

Act 2: Throughout the film, Rocky faces a series of sub-conflicts reflecting his personal challenges and journey towards redemption.

Training and preparation: Rocky must train intensely to rise to the challenge, facing internal and physical doubts. This sub-conflict reflects his struggle to overcome his limitations.

Relationship with Adrian: Rocky's relationship with Adrian, a shy woman who works in a pet store, is a key sub-conflict adding an emotional dimension to the story. Their mutual love and support play a crucial role in Rocky's motivation.

Conflicts with Mickey: Mickey, Rocky's trainer, initially shows scepticism towards Rocky's abilities, creating tension. As they train together, they develop a mentor-disciple relationship that strengthens Rocky.

Act 3: The climax of the film arrives with the fight between Rocky and Apollo. Although Rocky does not win the fight, he goes the distance, earning everyone's respect and proving his worth. The resolution focuses on his personal victory and development as an individual.

The narrative of *Rocky* is iterative in its constant confrontation with physical and emotional challenges. Each training session, interaction, and fight is a variation of the central conflict of Rocky against his limitations and his quest for self-respect. This structure reinforces the theme of perseverance and redemption through continuous effort and self-improvement.

Episodic Scaffolding

Episodic scaffolding refers to a narrative structure where the main plot is broken down into a series of episodes or segments that do not follow a clear linear sequence nor depend on each other in terms of dramatic construction. Each episode can have its own conflicts and resolutions, and while they may be connected by a common theme or recurring characters, they do not necessarily form a traditional narrative continuity.

Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, criticized episodic plots for being incoherent and ineffective at maintaining audience interest. However, some films have demonstrated that this structure can be successful and engaging when used innovatively and purposefully, exploring complex themes in a multifaceted way, allowing for greater narrative and stylistic freedom. Additionally, individual episodes can be rich in symbolism, emotion, and detail, offering a cinematic experience that is both diverse and cohesive as a whole.

Intolerance (D. W. Griffith, 1916)

Intolerance, directed by D. W. Griffith in 1916, is a monumental film that attempted to revolutionize cinema with its ambitious narrative. The film weaves together four distinct stories from different eras: the fall of Babylon, the crucifixion of Jesus in Jerusalem, the massacre of the Huguenots in France, and a contemporary story of labour conflict in the United States. Despite its innovation and the magnitude of its production, *Intolerance* did not capture the interest of audiences at its time. The film is a classic example of episodic structure, where multiple plots unfold independently, connected by a common theme but lacking a clear narrative sequence between them.

Act 1: *Intolerance* begins by introducing its four main stories, each set in a different time and place. The image of a woman rocking a cradle acts as a visual thread, symbolizing the continuity of intolerance throughout history.

Act 2: Each of the four plots develops its own sub-conflicts, unrelated to each other directly but exploring the common theme of intolerance and human suffering.

Babylon: The Babylonian story focuses on the fall of the city to Cyrus the Great. Sub-conflicts include palace intrigues, betrayals, and epic battles.

Jerusalem: The Jerusalem plot deals with the last days of Jesus, including Judas' betrayal and the crucifixion. Religious and political sub-conflicts highlight the intolerance of the era.

Paris: The massacre of the Huguenots in France centres on religious struggles between Catholics and Protestants. Sub-conflicts include conspiracies, assassinations, and power struggles.

Contemporary USA: The modern story follows a young couple facing labour injustices and police brutality. Social and economic sub-conflicts reflect class struggle and corruption.

Act 3: Each story reaches its climax independently, culminating in tragic events that underscore the theme of intolerance. The fall of Babylon, the crucifixion of Jesus, the massacre of the Huguenots, and the violent suppression of the strike in the United States are the climactic points of each plot. The narrative of *Intolerance* is episodic in its scaffolding, with four plots unfolding independently and connected only by the common theme of intolerance. The rocking cradle acts as a visual symbol connecting the stories, but there is no narrative continuity between them. This structure reflects Griffith's vision of intolerance as a universal and timeless evil but also shows the limitations of an episodic narrative in terms of cohesion and dramatic development.

The Seventh Seal (Bergman, 1957)

The Seventh Seal is a film directed by Ingmar Bergman in 1957, known for its deep exploration of existential and religious themes. Set during the Black Death, it follows a medieval knight playing a game of chess with Death while seeking answers about life and faith. The film has been acclaimed for its symbolism, cinematography, and philosophical dialogue.

Act 1: The film begins with the knight Antonius Block and his squire Jöns returning home from the Crusades, only to find their land ravaged by the plague. The knight encounters Death and challenges him to a game of chess, hoping to gain time to find answers to his existential questions.

Act 2: As the chess game progresses, the film introduces a series of sub-conflicts that explore the struggles of different characters during the plague.

The survival of the jester's son: A jester and his family struggle to survive in a world plagued by disease and despair.

The peasant's wife's infidelity: A peasant faces his wife's betrayal while both try to survive the plague.

The cruelty of the friar: A fanatical friar uses the plague as an excuse to exert his power and cruelty over the villagers.

Act 3: The film's climax arrives when the knight and his companions face the inevitable arrival of Death. The resolution occurs when Death finally wins the chess game, leading the characters to their final fate. The narrative of *The Seventh Seal* is episodic in structure, with multiple sub-conflicts exploring different aspects of life and death during the plague. These sub-conflicts are connected by the knight's journey and quest for answers, but each develops relatively independently. The episodic structure allows Bergman to explore a variety of themes and characters, creating a rich tapestry of medieval life.

Satyricon (1969) by Federico Fellini

Satyricon is a film directed by Federico Fellini in 1969, loosely based on the eponymous work by Petronius. The film is a series of vignettes narrating the adventures of Encolpio and Ascilto in ancient Rome. With its visually exuberant style and non-linear narrative, *Satyricon* is a surreal exploration of decadence, hedonism, and the search for meaning in a chaotic world.

Act 1: The film introduces Encolpio and Ascilto, two young men competing for the love of the young Giton in decadent Rome. The narrative unfolds through a series of episodes that do not follow a clear linear sequence.

Act 2: Throughout the film, sub-conflicts develop in a series of vignettes that present different aspects of Roman life.

The cutting of the comedian's hands: In a brutal scene, a comedian is severely punished, reflecting the brutality and despotism of the era.

The agony of the albino seer in the desert: A vignette shows the suffering of an albino seer, symbolizing hopelessness and the search for meaning in a chaotic world.

The hero's pains of love: Encolpio faces a series of romantic misadventures, exploring themes of desire, betrayal, and disillusionment.

Act 3: The film lacks a traditional climax, following an episodic and fragmented structure. Each vignette offers its own conclusion, and the film ends with Encolpio continuing his quest in a world that remains as chaotic and incomprehensible as it was at the beginning. The narrative of *Satyricon* is episodic, with each vignette functioning as an independent exploration of different aspects of life and decadence in ancient Rome. The non-linear, fragmented structure allows Fellini to create a surreal and complex vision of the era, using chaos and disjunction to reflect the central themes of the film.

Magnolia (Anderson, 1999)

Magnolia weaves multiple stories of characters in the San Fernando Valley, exploring themes of redemption, coincidence, and the impact of the past on the present. With an ensemble cast including Tom Cruise, Julianne Moore, and Philip Seymour Hoffman, *Magnolia* has been praised for its ambitious narrative and emotional depth.

Act 1: The film introduces a series of characters whose lives are interconnected in unexpected ways. Each character faces their own personal conflicts, from terminal illness to addiction and alienation.

Act 2: Throughout the film, the sub-conflicts of each character develop in parallel, revealing their internal struggles and connections to other characters.

The dying TV host: Jimmy Gator, a TV host, faces his mortality and his broken relationship with his daughter, Claudia.

The infomercial guru: Frank T.J. Mackey, an infomercial guru, struggles with the revelation of his past and his estranged relationship with his dying father, Earl Partridge.

The child prodigy: Stanley Spector, a child prodigy, faces pressure from his controlling father and the stress of his life in television.

The devoted nurse: Phil Parma, a nurse caring for Earl Partridge, tries to reunite him with his son before he dies, facing emotional and logistical obstacles.

Act 3: The film's climax arrives with a series of coincidental and cathartic events, culminating in a rain of frogs symbolizing divine intervention and the chaos of the universe. The resolution is found in the redemption and closure some characters achieve, while others continue to face their internal demons. The narrative of *Magnolia* is episodic in structure, with multiple stories developing in parallel and connected by common themes and coincidences. Each story has its own resolution, but together they form a complex mosaic of life in the San Fernando Valley. The episodic structure allows Anderson to explore a wide range of human emotions and experiences, creating a rich and multifaceted narrative that deeply resonates with the viewer.

These examples of episodic films succeed due to their richness of conflicts. Instead of limiting to one or two, as in the boring films cited above, episodic screenwriters triumph by continuously raising questions in viewers, conflicts that spark interest in their causes or consequences, regardless of their lack of direct relation. Preserving the requirement of not exceeding the duration of a conflict by more than five minutes, episodic scaffolding is free to explore complex themes and create a rich and varied cinematic experience.

Disarticulated Scaffolding

Disarticulated scaffolding is characterized by the juxtaposition of conflicts and narratives that are not directly related to each other. Instead of a cohesive plot or thematically connected episodes, these films present a series of independent scenes or stories that may seem disconnected at first glance. This style of narration challenges traditional audience expectations and allows for greater creative freedom, exploring themes and emotions in a fragmented and often surreal manner.

Disarticulated films can be organized using a map, a technique that helps guide the viewer through the various episodes and themes, providing an underlying structure that may not be immediately apparent. Below is an analysis of how this technique is applied in several examples of disarticulated films:

Andrei Rublev (Tarkovsky, 1966)

Andrei Rublev is a film directed by Andrei Tarkovsky in 1966. It is a fictional biopic of the famous Russian icon painter Andrei Rublev. With its lyrical style and focus on spiritual and artistic exploration, the film is considered a masterpiece of cinema.

Act 1: The film begins with seemingly disconnected scenes that establish the tone and historical context. One of the early scenes shows a man flying in a sphere above a bell tower, an image not directly related to the main narrative but symbolizing the quest for transcendence.

Act 2: As the film progresses, various stories and characters are presented that are not directly connected but reflect themes of faith, art, and suffering.

Andrei Rublev's Pilgrimage: The main narrative follows Andrei on his spiritual and artistic quest, facing the challenges of creating art in times of violence and oppression.

Bell Casting: A significant subplot is the story of a young, inexperienced boy tasked with casting a large bell for a cathedral, symbolizing faith and human effort.

Other Episodes: Other episodes include depictions of pagan festivals and the brutal Tatar invasion, each contributing to the film's thematic mosaic.

Act 3: The film does not follow a traditional climax structure. Instead, it culminates in a series of poetic and symbolic images reflecting Rublev's life and work, ending with a colour sequence showing his icons, symbolizing the redemption and permanence of art. The narrative of *Andrei Rublev* is disarticulated in its structure, with episodes functioning more as independent vignettes than a linear story. This style allows Tarkovsky to explore universal themes in a fragmented manner, using mural-like narrative techniques to find eventual continuity and unity through symbolism and visual reflection.

The Tree of Life (Terrence Malick, 2011)

The film mixes the story of a family in Texas during the 1950s with the creation of the universe and the evolution of life on Earth. With its visually stunning style and philosophical focus, the film has been acclaimed for its ambition and depth.

Act 1: The film begins with scenes of the everyday life of the O'Brien family, interspersed with images of the cosmos and nature. These scenes establish the meditative tone and cosmic scope of the narrative.

Act 2: As the film progresses, various sequences explore themes of love, loss, and existence.

The O'Brien Family's Life: The main story follows young Jack and his relationship with his parents, exploring themes of discipline, affection, and personal growth.

Creation of the Universe: Impressive sequences show the formation of the universe, the emergence of life on Earth, and natural events reflecting the magnificence of existence.

Existential Reflections: Adult Jack reflects on his childhood and his place in the cosmos, providing a philosophical framework for the images and experiences presented.

Act 3: The film culminates in an abstract sequence showing the spiritual and emotional reconciliation of the characters, mixing images of the family with cosmic visions. The resolution is more emotional and contemplative than narrative. The narrative of *The Tree of Life* is disarticulated in its structure, mixing scenes of family life with images of the universe in a non-linear form. This approach allows Malick to explore grand philosophical and existential themes through a structure that reflects the complexity and interconnectedness of life and the cosmos.

Cloud Atlas (Tykwer and the Wachowskis, 2012)

Cloud Atlas is a film directed by Tom Tykwer and the Wachowski siblings in 2012. Based on the novel by David Mitchell, the film presents six separate stories set in different times and places, from the 19th century to a post-apocalyptic future. Despite their temporal and spatial diversity, the stories are united by common themes and characters that reincarnate across different eras. **Act 1:** The film introduces the characters and contexts of each of the six stories, establishing a thematic framework of connection and recurrence across time. **Act 2:** Each story develops its own conflicts and characters, interspersed in a way that highlights the thematic connections between them.

Adam Ewing's Diary: In the 19th century, a lawyer fights against slavery and uncovers a deadly plot on his sea voyage.

Robert Frobisher: In the 1930s, a young composer writes letters to his lover while working for a famous composer and facing his own personal tragedy.

Luisa Rey: In the 1970s, a journalist investigates a corporate conspiracy that endangers her life.

Timothy Cavendish: In the present day, a literary editor is trapped in a nursing home against his will and must plan his escape.

Sonmi-451: In a dystopian future, a cloned woman fights for her freedom and becomes a symbol of revolution.

Zachry: In a post-apocalyptic future, a man faces his fears and alliances while struggling to survive. **Act 3:** Each story reaches its own climax and resolution, but together they form a complex tapestry of recurring themes about the struggle for freedom, human connection, and resistance to evil. The narrative of *Cloud Atlas* is disarticulated in its structure, with six independent stories developing in parallel. The thematic connections and recurring characters create a sense of unity and continuity despite the temporal and spatial diversity. This approach allows for a rich and multifaceted exploration of the film's central themes.

The Holy Mountain (Jodorowsky, 1973)

The Holy Mountain is a surrealist film directed by Alejandro Jodorowsky in 1973. The film presents a series of disparate scenes and characters that challenge conventional narrative, exploring themes of spirituality, consumerism, and self-realization through impactful and symbolic imagery.

Act 1: The film begins with a nameless thief waking up in a desert and embarking on a series of hallucinatory experiences that lead him to an alchemist.

Act 2: The narrative unfolds through a series of surreal episodes presenting different aspects of society and spirituality.

Spiritual Training: The thief and other characters are trained by the alchemist on a journey of self-discovery and spiritual transformation.

Symbolic Visions: Visually impactful and symbolically laden scenes explore themes such as corruption, war, religion, and consumerism.

Quest for the Holy Mountain: The characters embark on a pilgrimage to find the Holy Mountain and achieve enlightenment.

Act 3: The film culminates with a metaphysical revelation at the summit of the Holy Mountain, where the characters discover the illusory nature of their quest and reality. The narrative of *The Holy Mountain* is disarticulated in its structure, with scenes and episodes that do not follow a logical or linear progression. This approach allows Jodorowsky to explore a wide range of themes and symbols in a free and creative manner, challenging narrative conventions and leading the viewer to a transformative cinematic experience.

Daisies (1966) by Věra Chytilová

Daisies is a Czech film directed by Věra Chytilová in 1966. The film is known for its bold visual style and anarchic, experimental approach. It follows two young women who challenge social norms through a series of absurd and disconnected episodes.

Act 1: The film begins with the two protagonists, Marie I and Marie II, deciding that the world is "rotten" and that they should also behave in a "rotten" manner. This establishes the anarchic and surreal tone of the film.

Act 2: Throughout the film, the Maries engage in a series of pranks and acts of rebellion that challenge social and moral norms.

Absurd Dates: The Maries go on dates with older men whom they deceive and manipulate, mocking romantic and social conventions.

Banquet Destruction: In one of the most memorable scenes, the Maries attend a banquet and proceed to destroy all the food, symbolizing their rejection of conformity and excess.

Role-Playing: The Maries constantly change appearances and roles, challenging expectations of identity and gender.

Act 3: The film does not follow a traditional structure. Instead of a clear resolution, it ends with the Maries facing the ambiguous consequences of their actions, open to interpretation. The narrative of *Daisies* is disarticulated in its structure, with episodes that do not follow a logical progression or have direct connections. This approach allows Chytilová to explore themes of anarchy, feminism, and rebellion in a free and experimental manner, challenging cinematic norms and offering a sharp critique of society.

Manatí: Portrait of a third-world Happy Town (*Manatí: Retablos de un Pueblo Subdesarrollado y Feliz*, Santander Ferreira, 2012)

Manatí: Retablos de un Pueblo Subdesarrollado is a documentary filmed by Hugo Noël Santander Ferreira in 1998. The film explores the life and challenges of the community of Manatí, a small town on Colombia's Atlantic coast, presenting a series of vignettes highlighting different aspects of community life and efforts to improve their conditions.

Act 1: The documentary begins with a preamble that contextualizes the armed conflict in Colombia and the efforts of Jaime Santander, a Jesuit priest, to organize and guide the peasant movement in Manatí. This preamble sets the historical and social tone of the documentary.

Act 2: As the documentary progresses, various stories and interviews are presented that are not directly connected but reflect common themes of peace, justice, and community development.

Oasis of Peace: Manatí is presented as an oasis of peace in a country convulsed by violence.

Health: The deficiency of health services in the region is explored through a Cinema Verité sequence that exposes corrupt practices in the region.

Union: The history of the local union and its fight for workers' rights is detailed through a community discussion.

Spirits: The community's spiritual beliefs and traditions are presented, evidenced by the use of both antiparasitic and prayers by blessed men who drive worms away from sick cattle.

Land: Problems and solutions related to land ownership are discussed, showing how new owners become small landowners.

Education: The impact of education on the community is explored, highlighting the founding of the agrarian university by Jaime Santander.

Jaime: The life and legacy of Jaime Santander S.J. is described; an idealistic Jesuit who, unlike his peers, chose to work in the poorest town in Colombia, in poverty, and who, for defending the rights of peasants, was beaten, imprisoned, and tortured, as well as freed by peasants who rose to liberate him.

Youth: The aspirations and challenges of young people in Manatí are highlighted, evidencing their poverty and continued emigration to Venezuela.

ASOGAMA: The organization ASOGAMA and its model of self-sufficient economy are analysed, showing how its administrators embezzle its members in broad daylight.

Ethics: The importance of ethics in community life is presented, based on the camaraderie of ASOGAMA members.

Economy: The economic challenges faced by Manatí are explored.

Manatí: The film culminates with a reflection on the community and its future.

Act 3: The documentary culminates with a call to action and a reflection on Jaime Santander's spiritual legacy, which has personally affected the filmmaker, and the future of Manatí, highlighting the importance of spirituality in improving the community's living conditions.

The narrative of *Manatí* is disarticulated in its structure, with episodes functioning more as independent vignettes than a linear story. This style allows for the exploration of a wide range of themes and perspectives related to life in Manatí, creating a rich and varied experience that informs and sensitizes the viewer.

The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara (Morris, 2003)

The Fog of War is a documentary directed by Errol Morris in 2003. The film features a series of interviews with Robert S. McNamara, former U.S. Secretary of Defense, interspersed with archival footage and re-enactments exploring his experiences and lessons learned throughout his career.

Act 1:

The film begins with McNamara reflecting on his life and career, setting an introspective and didactic tone. The eleven lessons presented throughout the documentary act as an organizing framework.

Act 2:

Each lesson is presented as an independent episode, exploring different aspects of McNamara's career and the decisions he made.

Lesson 1: Empathize with your enemy: McNamara discusses the importance of understanding the perspectives of adversaries.

Lesson 2: Rationality will not save us: Examines the limitations of logic and reason in decision-making.

Lesson 3: There's something beyond oneself: Explores the ethical and moral principles that should guide behaviour.

Lesson 4: Maximize efficiency: McNamara reflects on the need to use resources effectively.

Lesson 5: Proportionality should be a guideline in war: Analyses the importance of proportionality in military conflicts.

Lesson 6: Get the data: Highlights the necessity of basing decisions on accurate and reliable data.

Lesson 7: Belief and seeing are both often wrong: Discusses misperceptions and their consequences.

Lesson 8: Be prepared to re-examine your reasoning: Emphasizes the importance of continually questioning and reviewing decisions.

Lesson 9: In order to do good, you may have to engage in evil: Explores the ethical complexities of making difficult decisions.

Lesson 10: Never say never: Reflects on the need to keep an open and flexible mind.

Lesson 11: You can't change human nature: Accepts the inevitability of certain aspects of human behaviour.

Act 3:

The documentary culminates with a final reflection from McNamara on the lessons learned and his legacy, leaving the viewer with a deeper understanding of the ethical and moral dilemmas in politics and war.

The Fog of War is disarticulated in its structure, with each lesson functioning as an independent episode. This approach allows Morris to explore a wide range of themes and experiences in a deep and reflective manner, providing a multifaceted view of McNamara's life and legacy.

Le Fantôme de la Liberté (Buñuel, 1974)

Le Fantôme de la Liberté is a surrealist film directed by Luis Buñuel in 1974. The film presents a series of absurd and independent vignettes that explore the nature of freedom and society, challenging narrative and logical conventions.

Act 1:

The film begins with a scene in which a group of monks stays at a hotel and sees their guests practicing sadomasochism. This absurd image sets the surreal tone of the film.

Act 2:

Each vignette presents a disconnected and absurd situation that reflects the film's themes.

Fake pornographic postcards: A man gives postcards to a girl with a mischievous suggestion that they are pornographic, but they turn out to be simple tourist postcards.

The shooting lesson: A group of nuns gathers for a shooting lesson, discussing mundane topics while practicing.

The police class: Policemen attend a class and behave like teenagers before a teacher, showing their disinterest in anything non-military.

The kidnapping of the girl: A girl disappears, apparently kidnapped, but continues to be present and participates in the search for herself.

The social dinner: A scene in which dinner guests sit on toilets and defecate instead of digesting dinner.

Act 3:

The film concludes with another vignette, in which a serial killer becomes a man adored by women and acclaimed by the female masses.

Le Fantôme de la Liberté is disarticulated, with scenes or vignettes that do not follow a logical or linear progression. This approach allows Buñuel to explore a wide range of social and philosophical themes freely and creatively, using surrealism to challenge the viewer's expectations and provoke sharp reflection on the nature of freedom.

Again, disarticulated films work because of their richness in conflicts. Instead of being limited to a few that are drawn out ad nauseam, disarticulated screenwriters succeed by continuously raising questions in the viewers, conflicts that pique interest due to their causes or consequences, regardless of their disarticulation.

5. Screenplay

"The word came here then, Tepeu and Gucumatz came together, in the darkness, in the night, and they spoke to each other[21]," writes the chronicler of the Popol Vuh to present the creation of the world as a dialogue, mise-en-scène, or act of communication between two gods. And then, after the creation of the animals, the gods create men, capable of dialoguing with their creators. For words anticipate action, as Eric Bentley reminds us, quoting Freud:

> "Freud saw men as self-betrayers. Others, Judas like, they may betray with a kiss; themselves they most often betray with words [22]".

Words may constrain our movements, but such stillness is the key to the boundless universes of imagination and fantasy. Writing is creation in its purest manifestation. Not surprisingly, the ancient writers were also holy men.

The Spanish film director Luis Buñuel, once asked why he didn't make surrealist films while working in Mexico, remarked that cinema was also a source of employment for many. This said, there are no written rules on filmmaking, just a series of recommendations supported by tradition or experience. As the main conflict of a screenplay can be formulated according to syllogisms, screenplays can be inductive, deductive, or abductive.

Inductive screenplays work with very clear-cut psychological profiles. As inductive deductions move from the particular to the general, inductive screenplays are often based on personal experiences. They rely on strong characters or warriors, who by virtue of their exceptional personalities, appear to be in control of their own fate. Most biopic films fall into this category, e.g., Gandhi (Attenborough, 1982), Malcom X (Lee, 1992), The Passion of the Christ (Gibson, 2003). We'll refer again to inductive screenplays in our Ethics.

Abductive screenplays are compilations of facts without explanation. The principle of causality is overwritten by those of creativity and metaphor. We should first expand on the concept of abduction.

In a page of a novel by Isaac Asimov, two characters ponder on the boundaries of artificial intelligence. The advocate of the robots argues that no computer would be able to generate ideas, for machines can only follow the laws of a particular logic. The creative impulses of reason appear to be the privilege of men. For many years, I have ruminated on this page. The ascendancy of reason above logic may invalidate science-fiction TV series about thinking robots, as it may throw light on the essence of western thought.

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21 Recinos, A. (1960). Popol Vuh: Las Antiguas Historias del Quiché. Fondo de Cultura Económica., p. 23.

22 Bentley, E. (1964). The Life of the Drama. New York, NY: Atheneum.

Since Kant, we represent ourselves in a universe ruled by the logic of geometry and mathematics. Such reduction has become the cornerstone of modern education, and reason is prescribed as the dam that contains the waters of imagination. But the efforts of the academy have been unable to deter the impulses of the majority. Reason is still understood in its primal meaning, the regulatory entity, the commander of diverse logics and impulses such as imagination and sensuality.

Let's take, for instance, four verses of Shakespeare:

> *Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,*
> *might stop a hole to keep the wind away.*
> *O that that earth which kept the world in awe*
> *should patch a wall t' expel the winter's flaw[23]!*

A verbatim reading will spoil the fragrance of the verses. Julius Caesar may turn into clay, but we are not allowed to inquire into the probability of the remains of him as the brick and coating of a construction site. Imagination prevails over the tiny probability that Julius Caesar's dust will end up forming the walls of the Arc de Triomphe.

Rather, we could consider Shakespeare as a poet of extremely original, unusual, innovative metaphors, which the theatre made a reality. Julius Caesar or his dust survives thus in one of the carotids of a theatre: a figure built alongside Shakespeare's immortal characters.

One day I read some verses to a statistician:

> *Every man and woman walks,*
> *No one dares to look aside,*
> *Like a slave fearing the stars,*
> *I follow their pace, far behind.*

Despite my efforts, my friend couldn't draw a parallel between the metaphor and her personal experience. Her reasoning was a product of geometry and mathematics. "No one walks like that unless they're forced to," was her factual refutation, when the poetic message synthesized the human condition and its struggle with freedom and fear. Each person, man or woman, follows a predetermined path without daring to deviate or explore new directions, as if they were slaves fearful of the unknown (represented by the stars). The poet feels left behind, following others, but also aware of this limitation.

The metaphor highlighted the tension between conforming to social expectations and the courage necessary to look beyond the known and explore new possibilities–the opposite of what, it goes without saying, my statistician friend did. That call to question conformity and to face the fears that prevent true freedom and self-discovery simply went unnoticed by her.

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23 Shakespeare, W. (n.d.). Hamlet (Act V, Scene 1). Oxford.

The Illogic of The Creative Reason

"Abduction" is a fundamental creative process in scientific research, as proposed by the American philosopher and mathematician Charles Sanders Peirce. Abduction is the true source of new ideas and contrasts with the deductive and inductive approaches to reasoning.

Peirce (1931) revisited the concept of abduction, originally proposed by Aristotle, to refer to the process of formulating explanatory hypotheses based on observations or experiences. Unlike deduction, which is based on the application of logical rules to derive conclusions from known premises, and induction, which seeks to generalize from particular cases, abduction involves generating new ideas and creating novel connections between existing concepts.

Peirce emphasizes the fundamental role of abduction in scientific research, as it allows for the emergence of new hypotheses that can subsequently be evaluated and refined. He argues that abduction is the only type of reasoning that introduces truly new ideas, while induction merely determines values, and deduction simply develops the logical consequences of an existing hypothesis.

Peirce highlights the pragmatic value of abduction, as it is the process that enables the formulation of hypotheses that can be tested and contrasted with reality. Through abduction, scientists generate tentative explanations for observed phenomena, which can then be evaluated through experiments, observations, and analysis.

As an example, Peirce cites Kepler and his discovery of the elliptical orbits of the planets, illustrating the pragmatic value of abduction. Kepler, upon observing discrepancies between observations and predictions based on circular models, abducted the hypothesis that the orbits could be elliptical. This hypothesis, although not a definitive conclusion, allowed Kepler to perform new calculations and make predictions that better matched the observations, laying the foundations for the modern understanding of planetary motion.

Peirce strongly criticizes the positivist view that limits valid hypotheses to those with a direct sensory basis. He argues that abduction allows for the generation of abstract and ethereal ideas, not necessarily derived from immediate sensory experience. These ideas, born from imagination and intuition, can later be evaluated and contrasted with reality, contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge.

The original question of philosophy, "How are synthetic a priori judgments possible?" is, for Peirce, the foundation of an abductive judgment. This question, which seeks to explain the nature of knowledge, is not based on direct sensory experience but arises from reflection and abstraction. Abduction is an instinctive reflex present in all human beings, an intuitive capacity to generate new ideas and connections, fundamental for learning, problem-solving, and creativity in general.

Although Peirce emphasizes the importance of recognizing and fostering abduction in society, his observations are limited to the field of scientific research and innovation, without considering that it is precisely in the realm of literary and artistic creation where abduction reigns supreme.

Unlike deduction and induction, abduction introduces novel ideas and opens paths for the advancement of knowledge. Peirce underscores the pragmatic value of

abduction and criticizes the positivist view that limits hypotheses to those with a direct sensory basis. Abduction, as an instinctive reflex present in all human beings, should be recognized and fostered to drive creativity, innovation, and progress in various fields:

> "It appears to me that the clearest statement we can make of the logical situation — the freest from all questionable admixture — is to say that man has a certain Insight, not strong enough to be oftener right than wrong, but strong enough not to be overwhelmingly more often wrong than right, into the Thirdnesses, the general elements, of Nature. An Insight, I call it, because it refers to the same general class of operations to which Perceptual Judgments belong. This Faculty is at the same time of the general nature of Instinct, resembling the instincts of the animals in its so far surpassing the general powers of our reason and for its directing us as if we were in possession of facts that are entirely beyond the reach of our senses. It resembles instinct too in its small liability to error; for though it goes wrong oftener than right, yet the relative frequency with which it is right is on the whole the most wonderful thing in our constitution[24]."

We often find abductive ideas within deductive frames and inductive arguments. Plato's condemnation of poets can be interpreted as the perplexity of a logician in the face of the multifaceted manifestation of reason in Greek tragedy and comedy. From the perspective of abduction, this reaction of Plato can be understood as a difficulty in accepting the generation of new ideas and connections that do not follow conventional logical reasoning. Nietzsche, by developing his theory of masks, offers a solution to this impasse from his critique of Platonic idealism. Nietzsche's theory recognizes and celebrates the creative capacity of abduction, where the multiplicity of perspectives and the intuitive generation of new hypotheses are essential for understanding the complexity of human experience.

Scope of Abduction in Cinema

Abduction serves as the matrix of poetic and artistic inspiration, conceptually illuminating how works that defy conventional logic are conceived and developed.

Abductive judgments shed light on the subject of poetic inspiration; Alan Resnais' "Last Year at Marienbad" (1961) and Orson Welles' "The Trial" (1962) serve as examples of abductive films that do not follow a traditional linear narrative. Instead, they unfold through dreamlike images, sudden impulses, and in some cases, nightmares. In both films, the plot evolves from dreamy imagery, fragmented memories, and free associations, inviting the viewer to reconstruct the story and formulate their own hypotheses about the characters and their motivations.

This non-linear and surrealist approach reflects the abductive process, where ideas emerge intuitively, allowing for a deeper exploration of the human psyche and

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24 Peirce, C. S. (1931). Collected Papers (C. Hartshorne & P. Weiss, Eds.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press. I, 65. V, 174.

alternative realities.

Art direction, a fundamental component of cinematic language, also draws from abduction. Inspired by fine arts and relying on intuition, art directors create fictional worlds that transport viewers to other eras, places, or realities.

Films like "Avatar" (2009), "Alice in Wonderland" (2010), and "Black Panther" (2018) exemplify how abduction manifests in the creation of settings and costumes. These elements, products of artists' imagination and ingenuity, contribute to the construction of unique and memorable cinematic universes.

The concept of Thao, originating from ancient Chinese philosophy, brings us closer to the essence of art as an experience of harmony and fluidity. The pianist who interprets a complex melody without being consciously aware of each note exemplifies this principle. In cinema, abduction operates similarly, guiding directors, actors, and the creative team in crafting a work that transcends the sum of its parts[25].

The creation of a cinematic work extends beyond mere technical execution; it involves an intuitive and creative collaboration that transcends its individual components. Directors, for instance, use abduction to conceive the artistic vision of the film, make decisions regarding visual aesthetics, narrative, and actors' performances, aiming to capture genuine emotions and delve into the themes of the story.

Marlon Brando, in his iconic role as Don Vito Corleone in "The Godfather," exemplifies abduction in acting. Brando not only mastered the craft of acting but also brought emotional intensity and a magnetic presence to the character that defined the role for future generations. His ability to breathe life and complexity into Don Corleone was not only a result of his talent and experience but also his skill in deeply connecting with the human and psychological aspects of the character.

Meryl Streep, a legendary figure in cinema, provides another notable example of how abduction influences acting. In each of her roles, Streep demonstrates impeccable technical mastery while also incorporating a sensitivity and innovative understanding of the characters she portrays. From her transformation into Margaret Thatcher in "The Iron Lady" to her acclaimed performances in "Doubt" and "Sophie's Choice," Streep embodies the power of abduction in creating complex and emotionally resonant characters.

Deductive filmtexts

Aristotle developed his concepts on Greek tragedy in *Poetics* primarily through a process of observation and induction. He examined contemporary and earlier Greek tragedies such as those by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, extracting common patterns and principles that contributed to the emotional success of these works. Based on these observations, he developed general principles on the structure and essential elements of Greek tragedy, including unity of action, emotional catharsis, peripeteia, anagnorisis, and the characterization of tragic characters. From his analyses, he constructed a coherent theoretical framework explaining how Greek tragedies affected the audience. His approach in *Poetics* was inductive and empirical, generalizing from

25 Huinan Zi (2003). Du Dao Originel, dans Philosophes Taoïstes. Gallimard.

specific examples to broader principles about the nature of dramatic art.

Although it's not entirely accurate to claim that the structure of traditional film scripts is exclusively deductive and solely based on Aristotelian principles from *Poetics*, most screenwriters derive narrative structures from these precepts, which, as we have seen, are grounded in epistemology, particularly in the a priori principle of causality.

Film scripts often follow a narrative structure comparable to the principle of causality, presenting conflicts with cause and consequence—an imperfectly deduced structure by Aristotle as introduction, development, and resolution. That said, the development of plots and characters varies in each generation, making any dramatic work a combination of deductive, inductive, and abductive elements.

Deduction involves reasoning from specific premises to an inevitable conclusion, reflected in the resolution of conflicts or revelation of key information.

In any screenplay, play, novel, poem, or story grounded in the principle of causality, viewers are induced to make abductive inferences through the discovery of clues, forming hypotheses, conducting investigations, and following leads. This process provides the necessary narrative structure and tension to advance the plot significantly.

Deductive screenplays are the most widespread, widely commented by the American gurus of screenwriting. A deductive screenplay distributes actions according to predetermined classifications, paradigms, and actancial models.

A compelling screenplay is a representation of about 20 to 40 conflicts, interwoven along a single main conflict. There are exceptions, such as Lewis Teague's Cujo (1981), after a novel by Stephen King. Even so, if we dissect Cujo's screenplay, isolating every single conflict, we'll find out that most of them are but variations of a single conflict, e.g., Cujo attacking the woman and the child.

Cinema has relied on the conventions of storytelling from its very onset. The great merit of Georges Méliès was not only the representation of fairies, humanoid moons, and talking oysters. Méliès was a storyteller, a creative sensitive mind able to perceive the causes and consequences of conflicts in the realms of the imagination. He knew that magic was but a naked trick if divested of the charm and tension of storytelling. Méliès' imagination turned makers of myths into filmmakers.

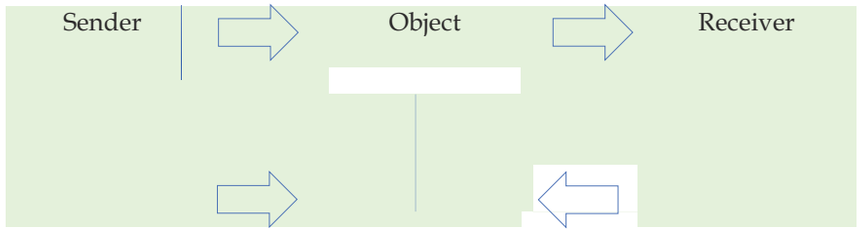
In 1928, Vladimir Propp compiled, dissected, and compared hundreds of narrative structures from folktales[26]. Propp's research still has the power to persuade readers of the direct relationship between cinema and storytelling. Propp presented seven "act spheres" as components of the folktale:

Aggressor,
Donor,
Auxiliary,
Princess & the Father,
Committer,
Fake Hero

26 Propp, V. (1928). Morphology of the Folktale. University of Texas Press.

Hero

Propp's contributions were developed in the areas of linguistics and semiotics. In 1966, Greimas expounded an actancial model with one vertical and two horizontal axes of action.



Greimas' actancial model has the virtue of conciseness. It can be used as a pocket-compass by playwrights and screenwriters. The model identifies six fundamental roles, or actants, that play a crucial part in the narrative structure:

1. Subject: The protagonist or central character who desires or seeks to achieve something. The subject is the driving force of the narrative, initiating actions and pursuing their goals.

2. Object: The desired object or goal that the subject seeks to attain. The object can be tangible, like a physical item, or intangible, like a state of being or an abstract concept.

3. Receiver: The entity that ultimately benefits from the subject's actions and the attainment of the object. The receiver may be the subject themselves or another character.

4. Sender: The entity that initiates the narrative and motivates the subject to pursue the object. The sender may provide the subject with instructions, guidance, or a challenge.

5. Helper: The character who assists the subject in their quest to achieve the object. The helper may provide physical, emotional, or informational support.

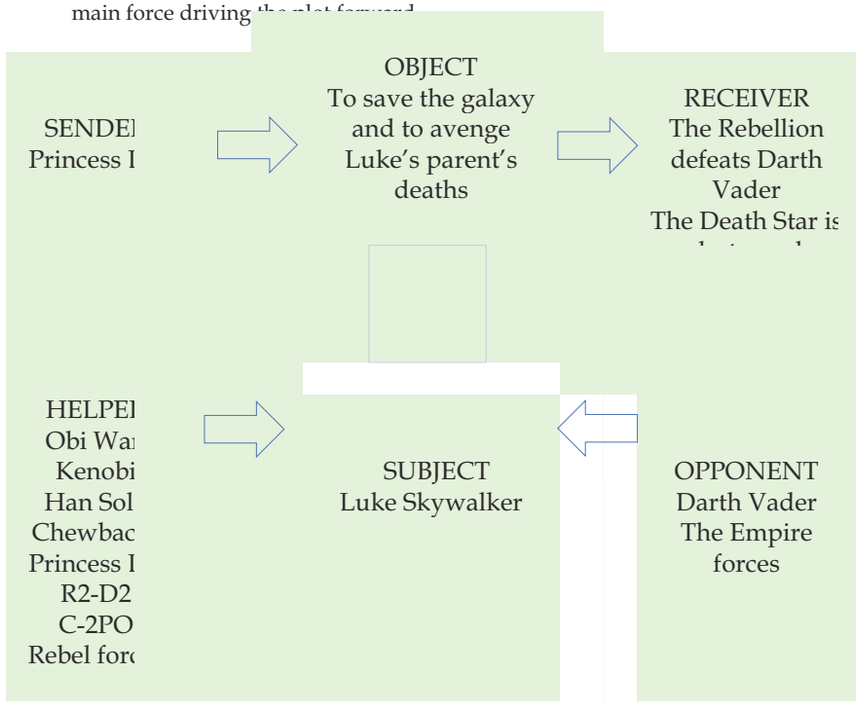
6. Opponent: The character who hinders or opposes the subject's efforts to attain the object. The opponent creates obstacles and challenges that the subject must overcome.

The relationships between these actants form the core of the narrative structure. The subject's desire for the object drives the plot forward, and the actions of the other actants either facilitate or hinder their progress.

In *Star Wars* (Lucas, 1977), for instance, we follow the adventures of Luke Skywalker, a farmer who, by rescuing a Princess and aiding an attack against the Empire with the help of a monk, a mercenary, and an alien, seeks revenge on the intellectual murderer of his adoptive parents.

Applying Greimas' actancial model to the narrative of *Star Wars*, we can break down the roles and their relationships as follows:

1. **Subject (Luke Skywalker)**: Luke Skywalker is the protagonist of the story. He is a young farmer who discovers his destiny as a Jedi and becomes the main force driving the plot forward.



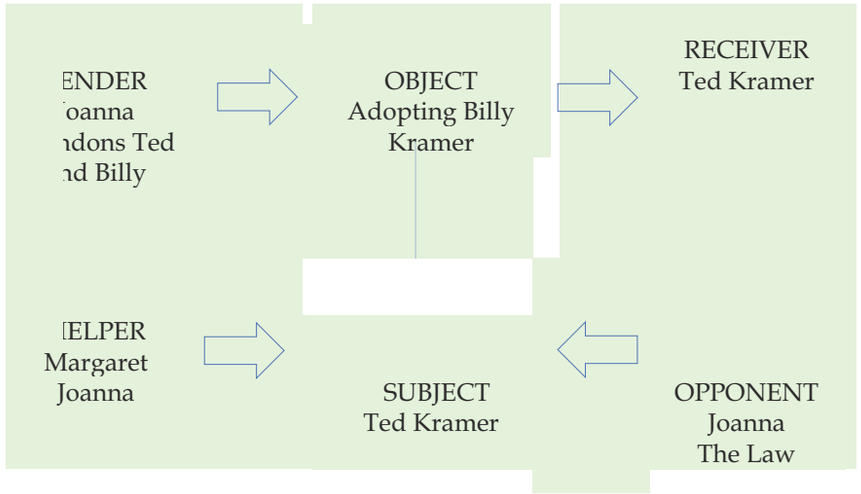
2. **Object (To save the Galaxy)**: The primary motivation of Luke is to avenge his parents, murdered by Galactic Empire soldiers, and to save the galaxy from the oppressive rule of Darth Vader.
3. **Receiver**: The Rebellion and the galaxy in general, which benefit from Darth Vader's defeat and the Death Star's destruction.
4. **Sender (Princess Leia Organa)**: Leia Organa is Luke's twin sister and leader of the Rebel Alliance. She initiates the mission by sending the distress message that sets Luke on his path.
5. **Helpers (Obi-Wan Kenobi, Han Solo, Chewbacca, R2-D2, C-3PO, rebel forces)**: Luke receives help from several important allies throughout his journey: a professor, a friend, a semi-human, two robots and the rebel forces.
   - **Obi-Wan Kenobi**: Luke's mentor and the character who provides initial guidance on the Force and gives him his first lightsabre.
   - **Han Solo**: A mercenary pilot who becomes one of Luke's closest friends.
   - **Chewbacca**: Non-human and yet semi human Han Solo's loyal co-pilot.
   - **R2-D2 and C-3PO**: Two droids who provide technical and moral assistance.

6. **Opponents (Darth Vader, The Empire)**:
   - **Darth Vader**: The main antagonist and a symbol of the dark power of the Empire. He is the greatest obstacle Luke must overcome.
   - **The Galactic Empire**: The evil entity that dominates the galaxy and against which Luke and his allies fight.

These relationships form the core of the narrative structure of *Star Wars*. Luke's desire to save the galaxy drives the plot, while the helpers and opponents either facilitate or hinder his progress. This actancial scheme reveals how the characters and their roles are interconnected in the narrative, creating a coherent and dynamic story.

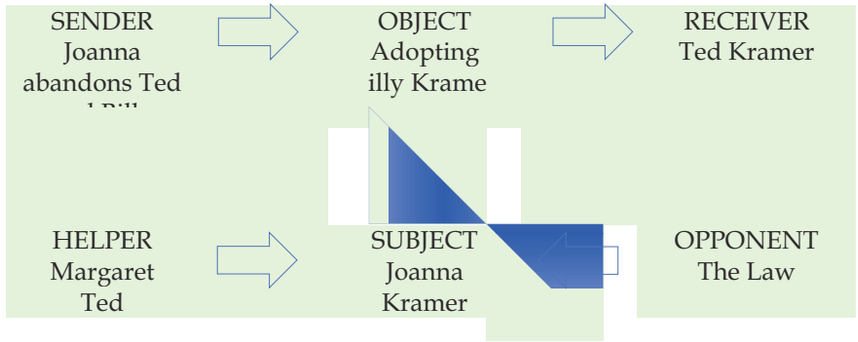
Critics have yet to recognize the close relationship between this plot and that of Henrik Ibsen's theatretext "A Doll's House" (1879). Both works address themes of female emancipation, the struggle for personal identity, and the complexities of family relationships in a changing socio-cultural context. *Kramer vs. Kramer* (Brenton, 1979) is, in fact, the sequel to "A Doll's House" adapted to modern times.

In "A Doll's House", Nora Helmer decides to leave her husband, Torvald, and her children in search of her identity and personal freedom. This decision, radical for its time, reflects the growing questioning of traditional gender roles and the beginning of female emancipation. Nora is portrayed as a woman who, despite her love for her children, feels that she must go out into the world to find herself and develop her potential outside the constraints of patriarchal marriage.



One hundred years after its premiere in theatres, *Kramer vs. Kramer* revisits the same theme of female emancipation in a modern context. Joanna Kramer (Meryl Streep) leaves her husband Ted (Dustin Hoffman) and their son in search of her own path, claiming the need to discover who she is outside the confines of marriage. The film primarily follows Ted's struggle to adapt to the new reality as a single father, and his eventual transformation into a dedicated and capable parent who now fights for custody of his only child. By taking on domestic and caregiving responsibilities, Ted breaks with the gender stereotypes of his time, demonstrating that parenting and caregiving are not inherently female roles.

As the drama unfolds, the inner world of the main characters becomes the driving force of the main plot. As in Ibsen's play, melodramatic conventions dissolve under the weight of a second actancial model:



The plot is now about the search for female identity and autonomy, reflecting Joanna's struggle as the secondary protagonist of the film, who drives the narrative with her challenge to patriarchal laws. If, in A Doll's House, Nora breaks with Victorian expectations of the woman as the angel of the house, in Kramer vs. Kramer, Joanna challenges contemporary expectations of the woman as a self-sacrificing mother. Both protagonists are, in reality, the same woman who yearns for a fuller and more authentic existence outside the roles that society imposes on her.

In 1969, Julia Kristeva, a prominent figure in the fields of linguistics, semiotics, and psychoanalysis, articulated a profound insight regarding the dynamics of narrative structures: the roles of subject and object often interchange, and this fluidity extends to the positions of helper and opponent as well[27]. This observation challenges traditional, static interpretations of character roles within narratives and introduces a more dynamic understanding of storytelling.

Kristeva's insight can be traced back to her contributions to semiotic theory, particularly her exploration of the symbolic and semiotic dimensions of language and text. According to Kristeva, the subject (often the protagonist) and the object (the goal or desired entity) are not fixed entities but can exchange roles depending on the narrative context and the perspectives of the characters involved. This fluidity mirrors the

27 Kristeva, J. (1969). "La dynamique des structures narratives." Paris: Communications, no. 8.

complexities of human identity and desire, where individuals constantly negotiate their positions in relation to others.

In traditional narrative theory, the subject is typically seen as the active agent pursuing a goal (the object), while the helper assists the subject, and the opponent creates obstacles. However, Kristeva's theory suggests that these roles are not static. For instance, in a complex narrative, the object of desire can become a subject with its own goals, thereby reversing the roles. Similarly, a character initially perceived as a helper may become an opponent, and vice versa, reflecting the multifaceted nature of relationships and motivations.

Let's apply Julia Kristeva's insights to Kramer Vs. Kramer, where characters undergo profound transformations, challenging traditional notions of protagonist, antagonist, and ally:

Initial Setup:

Subject (Ted Kramer): At the outset, Ted Kramer is depicted as the central character, a work-focused husband whose world is disrupted when his wife leaves him, leaving him to care for their young son.

Object (Custody of Billy Kramer): Ted's primary goal becomes not just to maintain custody but also to become a better father and understand his own priorities.

Helper (Margaret Phelps): Initially, Margaret, Ted's neighbour, offers support and guidance as Ted navigates his new role as a single parent.

Opponent (Joanna Kramer): Joanna's departure serves as the primary obstacle for Ted, but the legal battle for custody further intensifies the conflict.

Role Reversal:

Subject/Object Switch: As the story unfolds, Ted's journey evolves from a pursuit of custody to a deeper exploration of fatherhood and personal growth. Custody becomes more than just a legal battle; it's a quest for self-discovery and understanding.

Helper/Opponent Switch: While Margaret initially supports Ted, her own desires and conflicts emerge, leading to tension and ultimately a rupture in their relationship. Conversely, Joanna, initially positioned as an opponent due to her departure, undergoes a transformation, eventually seeking reconciliation with Ted and showing a willingness to co-parent Billy.

Application in Narrative Analysis:

Complex Character Dynamics: The characters in "Kramer vs. Kramer" are not confined to static roles. They evolve, revealing layers of complexity and depth that challenge simplistic categorizations of heroes and villains.

Psychological Realism: By allowing characters to shift roles, the film delves into the intricacies of human emotion and motivation, portraying a more authentic representation of familial relationships and personal growth.

Moral Ambiguity: The fluidity of roles introduces moral ambiguity, blurring the lines between right and wrong, and inviting the audience to contemplate the complexities of life's dilemmas.

Implications for Narrative and Character Development:

Nuanced Characterization: Writers can craft more nuanced characters by embracing the fluidity of roles, leading to more engaging and relatable storytelling.

Narrative Depth: Embracing role reversals can add depth to plotlines, injecting unpredictability and resonance into narratives.

Reflecting Human Complexity: By acknowledging the fluidity of character roles, narratives can better reflect the complexities of human experience, encouraging empathy and understanding.

Finally, we apply Greimas' actancial model to *Amadeus* (Forman, 1984).

Antonio Salieri: Subject

Antonio Salieri, an ambitious and talented composer, is driven by a burning desire to achieve musical greatness. His goal is to be recognized as a musical genius, surpassing the achievements of his rival, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. This deep longing for recognition and validation becomes the driving force of his actions throughout the narrative.

The Object

Salieri's object of desire is the destruction of Mozart's musical genius. The pursuit of this personal vendetta against God for making him professionally inferior to whom he considers a rude brat consumes him, making his life revolve around surpassing Mozart, whose ease of composition and natural brilliance arouse Salieri's envy and resentment. Mozart is the target of Salieri's envy and destructive impulses, who see in him the personification of everything he desires and cannot achieve.

The Sender

Salieri's inner ambition and his envy of Mozart's effortless talent articulate the film's sender: the destruction of Mozart. This process is gradual, and leads Salieri to a constant struggle in which he paradoxically hopes to demonstrate, if not his superiority, at least his equality with Mozart. But the contempt that Mozart shows towards his modest work leads Salieri to destroy Mozart in the most hypocritical and ruthless way.

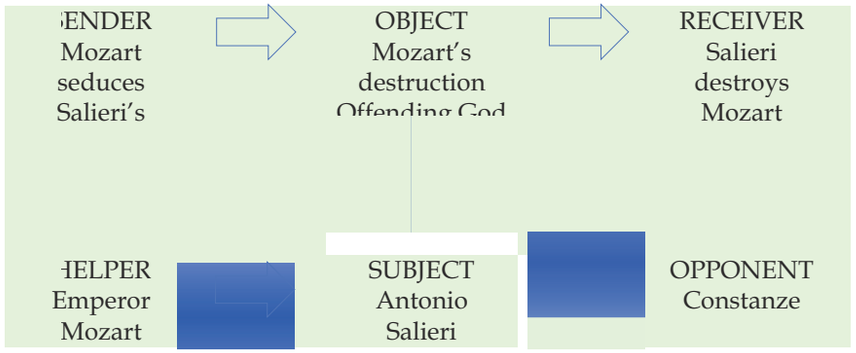
The Helper

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the embodiment of musical genius, is paradoxically Salieri's greatest helper in fulfilling his wish. Mozart, with his natural talent and unmatched brilliance, and due to his life of luxury and generosity, agrees, for a considerable sum that Salieri provides him, to compose a requiem that will end up consuming his health,

Another aide is Emperor Joseph II, who favours and protects Salieri. His position as court composer and his influence in the world of music provide him with the necessary means to manipulate and sabotage Mozart's success, using his status and connections to hinder Mozart's opportunities, always seeking ways to destabilize him and diminish his brilliance, to the point that, in cahoots with the mediocre musicians of the court, he manages to turn the Emperor against Mozart.

The Opponent

In the narrative of "Amadeus", only Constanze, Mozart's wife, emerges as a true heroine, opposing Salieri's designs on several occasions. Constanze, with her determination and love for Mozart, faces the growing threat posed by Salieri, who is consumed by envy and a destructive desire to eliminate his rival.



From the beginning, Constanze proves to be a strong and resilient figure. Despite financial difficulties and constant criticism of her husband, she remains steadfast in her support of Mozart, recognizing and appreciating his musical genius. Her presence and constant support not only offer a counterpoint to Salieri's destructive attitude, but also provide Mozart with a source of stability and love in the midst of chaos.

The first time Constanze opposes Salieri occurs when she becomes aware of Salieri's manipulative intentions. Despite the power difference between them, Constanze does not hesitate to confront him, showing remarkable bravery. Her confrontation is an act of direct defiance of Salieri's authority and manipulations, highlighting her role as protector of Mozart's legacy.

In another crucial instance, Constanze intervenes when Salieri tries to take advantage of Mozart's vulnerability. Through her cunning and determination, she manages to thwart Salieri's plans, ensuring that Mozart continues to have opportunities to create and share his music with the world. This act of resistance not only protects Mozart, but also directly challenges the control that Salieri attempts to impose over Mozart's life and career.

Constanze not only opposes Salieri on a personal level, but also on a symbolic level. She represents love and devotion in the face of envy and evil. Her opposition to Salieri is as much a fight for the well-being of her husband as it is a fight for justice and recognition of Mozart's true talent. Ultimately, Constanze emerges as a heroic figure whose courage and determination manage to counter Salieri's dark designs, highlighting her essential role in the narrative of "Amadeus."

Through her resistance and actions, Constanze underscores the importance of integrity and love in a world marked by uncontrolled ambition and envy. Her opposition to Salieri not only protects Mozart, but also preserves the legacy of her music for future generations, cementing her as one of the film's most memorable figures.

The narrative of "Amadeus" is characterized by a complex interplay of actancial relationships, where the roles of subject, object and opponent are not always static, but fluid and dynamic. This fluidity reflects the psychological complexities of the characters and the changing nature of their motivations.

Capturing the psychology of Pushkin's original monologue, Salieri's initial desire for musical recognition transforms into an obsession with destroying Mozart, driven by envy and a deep sense of inferiority. The object of his quest changes from achieving greatness to eliminating the source of his insecurity.

Mozart, oblivious to Salieri's machinations, serves as an unwitting opponent. His effortless talent and natural brilliance represent qualities that Salieri craves and resents, making him the target of Salieri's envy and destructive impulses.

The film's exploration of divine intervention and Salieri's belief that by destroying Mozart he takes revenge on God for not giving him the genius of musical composition, add another layer to the actancial analysis. Salieri's mistaken faith and his attempt to manipulate God's will further underscore his descent into moral depravity.

The audience, witnessing Salieri's destructive path and Mozart's tragic fall, serves as a collective recipient of the narrative message, gaining insight into the dangers of uncontrolled ambition, envy, and the destructive consequences of pursuing personal desires at the expense of others.

Gozzi's 36 dramatic situations

Gozzi reduced the combinations of playwriting to 36 dramatic situations. Goethe and Schiller approved of the remark, and in 1916, Georges Polti published "Les 36 situations dramatiques" in Paris. In this book, Polti organizes all the main events of literature and history into 36 recurrent conflicts.

The variations are many, and it would be unwise to overlook Polti's remarks. The 36 situations offer a range of possibilities or a menu to resourceful screenwriters; these are narrative structures tried by playwrights and audiences from diverse civilizations, all of which can be effortlessly identified in 20th-century cinema.

Today, scholars praise the dramatic genius of Aeschylus, Calderón, and Shakespeare. However, their plays are hardly original:

> "Shakespeare knew that tradition supplies a better fable than any invention can. If he lost any credit of design, he augmented his resources ; and, at that day, our petulant demand for originality was not so much pressed[28]."

The greatest playwrights often borrowed themes and structures from previous myths, legends, and even recent tragedies. Emerson recognizes this paradox and praises Shakespeare for his ability to use the dramatic material of his age:

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28 Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1903). Representative Men: seven lectures. Houghton Mifflin., p. 196.

Dramatic Situation	Dramatic Situation	Film Title	Director	Year
1	Supplication	The Mission	Joffé	1986
2	Deliverance	Quo Vadis	LeRoy	1951
3	Crime pursued by vengeance	The Virgin Spring	Bergman	1960
4	Vengeance taken for kin upon kin	The Godfather	Coppola	1972
5	Pursuit	Les Misérables	Lelouch	1995
6	Disaster	The Exterminating Angel	Buñuel	1962
7	Falling prey to cruelty or misfortune	Sophie's Choice	Pakula	1982
8	Revolt	The Educators	Weingartner	2004
9	Daring enterprise	Rififi	Dassin	1955
10	Abduction	Ransom	Howard	1997
11	The enigma	Citizen Kane	Welles	1942
12	Obtaining	Rocky	Avildsen	1976
13	Enmity of kin	Les Diaboliques	Clouzot	1955
14	Rivalry of kin	Wuthering Heights	Wyler	1939
15	Murderous adultery	Ossessione	Visconti	1943
16	Madness	Misery	Reiner	1990
17	Fatal imprudence	Psycho	Hitchcock	1960
18	Involuntary crimes of love	Breathless	Godard	1959
19	Slaying of kin unrecognized	Oedipus	Pasolini	1968
20	Self-sacrifice for an ideal	The Passion of the Christ	Gibson	2004
21	Self-sacrifice for kin	Brave Heart	Gibson	1995
22	All sacrificed for passion	Dog Day Afternoon	Lumet	1975
23	Necessity of sacrificing loved ones	Sweeney Todd	Burton	2007
24	Rivalry of superior vs. inferior	Gladiator	Scott	2000
25	Adultery	Madame Bovary	Minelli	1949
26	Crimes of love	The Crime of Father Amaro	Carrera	2002
27	Discovery of the dishonor of a loved one	Father	Power	1990
28	Obstacles to love	Great Expectations	Cuarón	1998
29	An enemy loved	Return of the Jedi	Lucas	1985
30	Ambition	The Treasure of the Sierra Madre	Huston	1948
31	Conflict with a God	The Exorcist	Friedkin	1973
32	Mistaken jealousy	Othello	Burge	1965
33	Erroneous judgement	The 400 Blows	Truffaut	1959
34	Remorse	Amadeus	Forman	1984
35	Recovery of a lost one	Saving Private Ryan	Spielberg	1998
36	Loss of loved ones	Titanic	Cameron	1997

"Great genial power, one would almost say, consists in not being original at all; in being altogether receptive; in letting the world do all, and suffering the spirit of the hour to pass unobstructed through the mind[29]."

Life is drama, the source of drama, and very much influenced by drama. Buñuel used to quote the Spanish philosopher Eugenio D'Ors, who dismissed writing from unknown sources as plagiarism:

"There was also [in Madrid] the great Eugenio d'Ors, a philosopher from Catalonia... He was the author of a line I often cite against those who seek originality at the expense of everything else. '*What doesn't grow out of tradition*', he used to say, '*is plagiarism*[30]."

Literary critics find their raison d'être in tracking the origins and influences of novelists and poets.

Our lives, like the lives of others, literature, newspaper chronicles, film, history, poetry, and theatre— everything perceivable—is a valid source of inspiration. Reality is filtered by the imagination of the artist to produce stories. Only those able to translate their knowledge and experience into dramatic material can produce innovative, compelling films.

29 Ibidem., p. 191.

30 Buñuel, L. (1983). My last sigh: The autobiography of Luis Buñuel (A. Israel, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. [Originally published in French as Mon dernier soupir.], p. 69 – 70.

6. Film Genres

Since ancient times, the division between comedy and tragedy has divided the stage. Today, we accept a greater number of genres. There is not a single pattern that organizes genre.

The porous line between fiction and documentary classifies film grosso modo. But whereas we are obliged to use the term "documentary" for certain types of films, we rarely speak of fictional films as "fictional". Instead, we use a typology forged by tradition. The most popular genres follow conventions set up by literature. Some of the most recurrent genres are: Action, Science Fiction, War, Musical, Drama, Historical, Horror, Western, Noir, Heist, Comedy, Western, and Thriller.

Action Genre

Action movies stand out for their intense sequences of movement and physical activity. These sequences often include fights, chases, explosions, and other elements that maintain high energy and a fast pace. The genre focuses on heroes facing extreme challenges and dangerous situations, frequently with an emphasis on physical prowess and courage.

The action film genre has its roots in the early days of cinema, with adventure serials and cowboy movies already showcasing exciting and high-tension scenes. As cinematic technology advanced, so did the ability to create more elaborate and spectacular scenes.

One of the pioneers in action cinema and physical comedy was Buster Keaton, whose work in *Sherlock Jr.* (Keaton, 1924) is a fundamental example of how humour and action can be effectively combined.

In *Sherlock Jr.*, Keaton employed advanced special effects for the time, such as image overlay and editing tricks that allowed his character to interact with a constantly changing world. This set a precedent for the creative use of special effects in action cinema.

The film includes a famous motorcycle chase scene that combines choreographic precision and dangerous stunts. These dynamic chases became a staple of action cinema, influencing future generations of filmmakers.

Keaton performed many of his own stunts, showing a level of physical commitment and risk that would inspire later action actors and directors. His ability to blend comedy and physical danger laid the groundwork for future action film stars.

Keaton was a master at storytelling through visual images without relying on dialogue, a crucial technique in action cinema where fast-paced sequences often require clear visual narrative to keep the audience informed and engaged.

From Russia with Love (Young, 1963) is a James Bond film directed by Terence Young, and it is an excellent example of how spy films can incorporate action elements. Well-choreographed fight scenes, exciting chases, and innovative gadgets became hallmarks of the genre. The fight on the train between Bond (Sean Connery) and the villain Red Grant (Robert Shaw) is particularly notable for its intensity and realism.

The combination of espionage, action, and a charismatic protagonist set a standard for future action films. The movie also showed how exotic locations and international plots can heighten excitement and intrigue.

The *Indiana Jones* series (1981-2008), directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Harrison Ford, revitalized the adventure and action genre with its blend of archaeology, history, and thrilling action. According to Hollywood newspapers, Spielberg requested to review and analyse over 100 classic adventure and action films to capture the spirit and excitement he wanted for *Indiana Jones*.

Action sequences, such as the convoy chase in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and the tank battle in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, are perfect examples of how to combine physical action with exciting narrative. The character of Indiana Jones became an icon of action and adventure.

Die Hard (McTiernan, 1988) is an action film classic that redefined the genre with its protagonist John McClane, an ordinary man facing an extreme situation. The film is known for its realistic action sequences, intense plot, and fast pace. More recently, *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), directed by George Miller, takes action to a new level with its stunning chase scenes and stunt choreography. The film is an example of how action cinema can be visually dazzling and narratively impactful.

Key Elements of Action Cinema

1. **Fight Choreography:**
   - Well-choreographed fights are essential for maintaining audience tension and interest. These sequences should be clear and exciting, with a strong emphasis on skill and style.
2. **Chases:**
   - Whether on foot, by car, on a motorcycle, or even in a helicopter, chases are a vital part of action cinema. They should be full of suspense and maintain a fast pace.
3. **Explosions and Special Effects:**
   - Explosions and special effects increase drama and visual spectacle. These elements should be used in a way that contributes to the narrative without completely dominating it.
4. **Heroic Protagonists:**
   - Action film heroes are often brave and determined characters, often with exceptional abilities or a strong personal motivation to overcome extreme obstacles.

Science Fiction

Science fiction films serve as a fascinating lens through which contemporary societal issues can be explored in imaginative and often futuristic settings. These movies transport viewers to worlds where advanced technology, alternative realities, and imaginative futures are not only possible but also integral to the narrative. Within these fantastical realms, filmmakers have the creative freedom to tackle pressing contemporary issues that resonate with audiences on a deep and meaningful level.

One such example is the film *I am Mother* (Sputore, 2019) delves into the complex

and controversial topic of abortion. Set in a post-apocalyptic world where humanity faces extinction, the movie follows the story of a teenage girl raised by a robot named Mother. As the girl begins to question her existence and the purpose behind Mother's actions, the film raises thought-provoking questions about autonomy, choice, and the ethics of reproduction.

Similarly, *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982) explores the theme of the death penalty in a dystopian future where genetically engineered beings known as replicants are hunted down by specialized police officers called Blade Runners. The film grapples with questions of identity, humanity, and the morality of state-sanctioned violence, prompting viewers to reflect on the implications of capital punishment in our own society.

Alien (Scott, 1979) another seminal science fiction film, confronts issues of racism and xenophobia through its portrayal of a diverse crew of space travellers who encounter a deadly extra-terrestrial creature aboard their ship. The film's exploration of fear, mistrust, and the unknown serves as a powerful allegory for the ways in which prejudice and discrimination manifest in our own world.

The Matrix (The Wachovskis, 1999) explores the chilling choice between comfortable ignorance and brutal reality. While the film delves into themes of rebellion against a controlling system, the harsh truth is that the system – the Matrix itself – offers a blissful illusion compared to the desolate wasteland that awaits those who escape. The rebels' fight against the machines becomes a desperate struggle, forcing viewers to confront the question: is a life of simulated happiness preferable to a fight for freedom in a world ravaged by machines? This dilemma resonates with contemporary fears of an spiritual world of heaven and hell, where the cost of knowledge may be far steeper than anyone imagined.

Star Wars (Lucas, 1977) uses its epic space opera setting to explore themes of state control and the struggle for freedom against oppressive regimes. Through its iconic characters and sweeping narrative, the franchise offers a compelling commentary on the nature of power, authority, and resistance, drawing parallels to real-world political struggles against regimes such as Castroism, communism, national socialism and fascism.

Science fiction cinema has its roots in 19th and early 20th-century science fiction literature, with works by authors such as H.G. Wells and Jules Verne. Early science fiction films, such as Georges Méliès' *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (1902), already showed an interest in space travel and futuristic technology. As cinematic technology advanced, science fiction films became more sophisticated and visually impressive.

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), directed by Stanley Kubrick and based on a story by Arthur C. Clarke, is a milestone in science fiction cinema for its serious and philosophical approach. It explores themes of artificial intelligence, human evolution, and the mystery of the cosmos.

Its innovative special effects and scientific realism set new standards for the genre. The film is also known for its non-linear narrative and its use of silence and classical music to create a unique atmosphere.

Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972) is an introspective journey into the boundaries of being in an atheist milieu, a masterpiece away from the thrilling action and futuristic spaceships that often define the genre. A Soviet film based on the novel of the same name

by Stanisław Lem, it takes us on an introspective journey into the non-material depths of the human being, its memories, desires, frustrations, and awareness of being infinite.

Unlike traditional science fiction films that focus on space exploration, intergalactic battles, or advanced technologies, *Solaris* focuses on the human psyche and its sense of being eternal. Tarkovsky uses the idea of a space station orbiting an intelligent ocean to create a scenario where his characters, particularly psychologist Kris Kelvin (played by Donatas Banionis), confront their own inner demons: memory, love, loss, and guilt.

What makes *Solaris* such a special work within the science fiction genre is its slow and contemplative pace. Tarkovsky does not seek to fill the screen with flashy special effects or dizzying action scenes. Instead, he focuses on creating an enveloping and dreamlike atmosphere, using long fixed shots, ethereal music, and an austere colour palette.

This stillness allows the viewer to immerse themselves in the thoughts and emotions of the characters, while reflecting on the big questions of human existence. The film explores the immaterial nature of consciousness, the possibility of a transcendental life, and the limits of human knowledge, all through an introspective and poetic narrative.

Blade Runner (1982), directed by Ridley Scott and based on Philip K. Dick's novel "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?", significantly influenced the aesthetics of recent science fiction cinema. Its dystopian vision of a cyberpunk future has been widely imitated.

The film raises questions about the nature of humanity and the morality of artificial intelligence. Its visual effects, production design and Vangelis' music created an immersive and compelling world that rejects the death penalty for any living being, no matter how criminal.

The Matrix (1999), directed by the Wachowski brothers, revolutionized science fiction cinema with its innovative use of special effects and its blend of philosophy and action. It introduced the concept of "bullet time," a visual technique that allowed viewers to see action scenes in slow motion from multiple angles.

Action sequences, such as the lobby fight and the final battle between Neo (Keanu Reeves) and Agent Smith (Hugo Weaving), combined cutting-edge special effects with stylized fight choreography, setting a new standard for futuristic action films.

The movie also stood out for its metaphysical plot, which added an unusual depth to the action genre. *The Matrix* explores the theme of rebellion against what postmodernity has labelled, not without a hint of disdain, the "comfort zone," conspiracy theories, and the validity of our dreams, making them the true reality and presenting the materialistic world of wakefulness as the world of illusions, the "samsara" that Buddhists condemn as illusory.

The transcendental world of the terrorists rebelling against the Matrix proves to be a modern version of Hell, dark, with millions of beings crowded together, pursued by demons who torture them and show them their past lives as an even greater torment, boxed in incubator chambers to extract their electrical impulses.

In popular culture, *Star Wars* (Lucas, 1977), has emerged as an epic saga that has captivated generations of viewers with its mix of space adventure, memorable characters,

and a story that resonates with universal themes. But behind the visual spectacle and thrilling narrative, there is a fundamental influence that has significantly contributed to the success and resonance of the saga: the work of mythologist and writer Joseph Campbell.

Campbell, renowned for his theory of the "monomyth" or "the hero's journey[31]", described a common narrative pattern found in myths and legends from various cultures around the world. This pattern, detailing the stages of a hero's journey from their ordinary life to their transformation and return to society, became a source of inspiration for numerous authors and filmmakers, including George Lucas, the creator of *Star Wars*

Consciously, Lucas adopted many of the key elements of Campbell's monomyth to shape the epic story of *Star Wars* The hero's journey is evident in the arc of the main character, Luke Skywalker, who from his humble beginnings as a farmer on Tatooine is called to an extraordinary adventure. Throughout the original trilogy, Luke faces various trials and challenges that transform him from a naive youth into a legendary Jedi.

His final confrontation with Darth Vader and Emperor Palpatine represents the culmination of the monomyth: "the resurrection", where the hero reaches his full potential and achieves redemption. Luke's transformation, from doubt and fear to courage and wisdom, reflects the inner journey that the hero must undertake to reach his true destiny.

Campbell's influence on *Star Wars* extends beyond Luke's journey. The concept of the Force, that omnipresent energy that guides the Jedi, resembles the notion of a transcendental power that guides the hero on his journey. Likewise, the conflict between good and evil, embodied by the Jedi and the Sith, reflects the universal struggle between opposing forces that Campbell identifies in myths from around the world.

Characters like Han Solo, Leia Organa, Obi-Wan Kenobi, and Yoda also embody different archetypes found in the monomyth. Each of them brings their own skills and characteristics to the narrative, enriching the complexity of the story and providing different perspectives on the themes explored.

Star Wars has become a cultural phenomenon that transcends the science fiction genre, inspiring

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Star Wars has become a cultural phenomenon that transcends the science fiction genre, inspiring artists, writers, and filmmakers from diverse generations. Its success lies in its ability to connect with the deepest human emotions and experiences, using the universal language of myth to tell a story that reminds us of the power of hope, courage, and the capacity we all have to become heroes in our own lives.

*Interstellar (*Nolan, 2014) takes a realistic approach to science and its precise representation of astrophysical concepts such as wormholes and relativity. Collaboration with scientists like Kip Thorne allowed the film to present complex scientific theories in

31 Campbell, J. (1988). The Way of the Hero. Joseph Campbell Foundation.

an accessible way. The emotionally charged narrative about love and sacrifice adds spirituality to the space epic.

Key Elements of Science Fiction Cinema:

1. **Thematic Exploration:** Science fiction films often tackle thorny philosophical and social taboos, exploring the impact of technology and science on humanity.
2. **Futuristic and Alternative Worlds:** The creation of detailed imaginary and future worlds is a key characteristic of the genre. This includes production design, visual effects, and narratives that transport the viewer to different realities.
3. **Technology and Special Effects:** The use of advanced technology, both in narrative and in film production, is fundamental to science fiction cinema. Special effects play a crucial role in creating these worlds.
4. **Complex Characters:** Characters in science fiction often face spiritual dilemmas, adding depth to the plots and allowing for the exploration of human nature.

Comedy

Comedy has been a favourite theme of inquiry since Aristotle. In order to understand it, we should consider first the concept of incongruity. According to Schopenhauer, humour arises from the failure of a concept to account for an object of thought.

What do smile and laughing have in common? They both are manifestations of two kinds of pleasure: a smile is an expression of joy, as a grin is an expression of mockery. Such experiences are triggered by external events.

Let's imagine a society that wants to measure the sensibility of its citizens. They ask participants to come and see a gag performed by an old lady in a closed room. During the representation of the show, the lady falls to the ground. The participant can then either come to assist the falling lady, do nothing, or laugh at the event. According to their reaction, participants are graded.

Laughter has always been related to disrespect towards the establishment, as the villain of *The Name of the Rose* (Annaud, 1986).reflects. The baser the actors are, the louder spectators laugh.

The recent social prohibitions against mockery, be it against the handicap or the overweight, are the outcome of a social awareness of the negative face of comedy. They were anticipated by Kundera, who bluntly separated the angelic laugh (joy) from the diabolical (mockery):

> "When the angel first heard the devil's laughter, he was stupefied. That happened during some feast, it was full of people and everyone joined in, one after another, to the devil's laughter, which was fantastically contagious. The angel clearly understood that this laughter was directed against God and against the dignity of his work. He knew he had to react soon, one way or another, but he felt weak and helpless. Since he was not able to invent anything by himself, he

imitated his opponent. Opening his mouth, he made a jerky, abrupt sound, in a very high tone of voice (similar to the one Micaela and Gabriela made on a street in a coastal city), but giving it the opposite meaning. While the devil's laughter indicated the absurdity of things, the angel's cry, on the contrary, aspired to rejoice that in the world everything was so wisely ordered, so well thought out and was beautiful, good and full of meaning.

Thus, the angel and the devil, facing each other, with their mouths open, produced more or less the same sounds, each expressing, in his cry, absolutely opposite things. And the devil, watching the angel laugh, laughed even more, better and more frankly, because the angel he laughed was infinitely ridiculous.

A laugh that makes you laugh is disaster. However, the angels managed to achieve some results. They fooled us all with their semantic imposture. There is only one word to designate his imitation of laughter and the original laughter (that of the devil). Today people no longer realize that the same external manifestation hides within itself two absolutely contradictory internal attitudes. There are two laughs and we have no words to distinguish one from the other. If we were to draw a line between these two states, on which members of a given society marked the preferred point of their humour, we could determine the degree of social sensitivity of a particular community[32]."

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Mockery_____ Joy
Disdain _____ Compassion

This interplay between Mockery and Joy, Disdain and Compassion, lends comedy its paradoxical allure. Ettore Scola's *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* stands as a prime example, captivating audiences with its biting satire while drawing criticism from more sensitive viewers.

But beneath the laughter lies a weighty question: Is mockery ever justified?

In an era shaped by political correctness and the push for inclusivity, the harmful repercussions of unchecked mockery have come to light. Movements advocating for marginalized groups have risen in response to a society that too often weaponizes ridicule to ostracize or degrade.

While satire can serve as a mirror to societal ills, there's a clear distinction between punching up and kicking down. Mocking individuals for immutable traits—be it appearance, gender, or disability—serves only to perpetuate stereotypes and deepen

32 Kundera, M. (1984). El libro de la risa y el olvido. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 96 – 97.

divisions. It's a form of humour devoid of empathy, one that undermines the fundamental respect owed to every individual.

In navigating the delicate terrain of comedy, it's crucial to tread with empathy and discernment. By honouring each person's inherent dignity, we can foster a culture of humour that uplifts rather than diminishes, one where laughter serves as a bridge, not a barrier.

But what also distinguishes comedy from most serious genres is its recurrence to gags. A gag was a visual joke in silent cinema. Today it is, by extension, any laughable dramatic happening, the representation of a joke or a funny situation. An apocryphal Aristotle was right to point out that the climax of comedy is not in the storyline, but in the microcosms of every joke. Lope de Vega wrote that the main virtue of the new Spanish theatre was the use of comic gags in tragedies.

Suspense

The skill of a screenwriter can be measured by his/her ability to create conflict within a conflict; descriptions of scenarios and props, actions and dialogues are presented as elements of conflict. Tension, the barometer of conflict, requires suspense. I call suspense the feeling of impotence shared by the viewers of a film. For the suspense writer or filmmaker, a plain story is never good enough. He secretly knows that people are delighted to be scared while watching a horror film, and with nightmarish representations, drive spectators into fear. Such screenwriters must be tormenting and tantalizing

We may know that the inspector of *Psycho* is going to be murdered by a member of the Bates Family, but there is nothing we can do. We are merely spectators. But such feeling of impotence could have been overshadowed in intensity by the sense of guilt shared by the first spectators of Notorious (Hitchcock, 1946), who were forced to believe that the glass of milk that the heroine was about to drink was poisoned.

Suspense is a genre exclusively cinematographic, from the tantalizing parallel sequences between the duel on the train and the fate of the girl in the post Station in Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), to the gripping sequences of Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), and his reformulation of suspense in *Psycho* (1960), to the minimalistic suspense of *Doubt* (Shanley, 2008). Generations of screenwriters and modern playwriters have made of it an art form that hinges on the ability to manipulate tension and anticipation in the audience.

Suspense is characterized as the feeling of helplessness or impotence shared by the audience. It's the sensation that something crucial is about to happen, but the outcome remains uncertain. This involves crafting nightmarish scenarios that tap into primal fears and drive spectators into a state of anxiety and excitement. In order to create suspense, every scene and setting should contribute to such conflict in some way. Actions should propel the conflict forward, while dialogues should reveal underlying tensions and motivations. Each line spoken should contribute to the overall suspense of the narrative.

A suspense screenwriter changes the point of view (POV) of the narrative in order to enhance the tantalizing or gripping nature of the story's conclusion. The narrative perspective shifts throughout the story, and this flexibility is warranted or justified by the

intense and compelling nature of how the story ultimately unfolds or concludes. It implies that the changes in POV serve the purpose of building suspense and keeping the audience or readers engaged until the tantalizing or climactic resolution.

First-person narration allows for intimate insights into a character's thoughts and emotions, enhancing the audience's connection and empathy. Second-person narration can create a sense of direct involvement with the reader or viewer. Third-person narration, common in cinema due to its versatility, provides an objective viewpoint that can encompass multiple characters and perspectives.

Unlike literature, cinema can utilize a range of visual techniques to establish and manipulate point of view. Consider how the camera's perspective can shift from character to character, influencing the audience's understanding of events and heightening suspense.

In Dracula (1930,) Tim Browning's adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel, the film cleverly uses different character perspectives. The initial scenes follow Jonathan Harker, then shift to Nina Harker, and finally focus on Doctor Van Helsing. By varying the POV, the film builds intrigue and suspense, withholding crucial information and perspectives until the right moment.

Sustaining suspense requires withholding information strategically and revealing it at moments that maximize tension and anticipation. Ultimately, the art of suspense lies in tormenting and tantalizing the audience—creating a thirst for resolution that keeps them engaged until the very end. By integrating these elements into their storytelling, novel screenwriters can master the craft of suspense, keeping readers and viewers on the edge of their seats throughout their narrative journey. Eternal thirst is a feeling that is prompted by suspense, and that is duly quenched by the resolution of the script.

Westerns

There are two true American inventions, said C Eastwood: Jazz and the Westerns.

Such appreciation should accept many variations. From the fox-trod and the Soul, to the Techno-pop and rap; from the gangsters flicks to the science-fiction sagas of Hollywood. But as jazz has almost dispersed from the spotlight in order to give space to its most fashionable modern manifestations,

In the Manichaean discourse, the audience typically identifies with a protagonist harbouring feelings of vengeance and destruction against an invading or disruptive antagonist. This structure was crucial to the popularity of American Westerns in the first half of the 20th century. In these films, the invaders were not depicted as the European immigrants arriving on the great plains, but rather as the Indigenous peoples who had lived there for centuries. The portrayal of Native Americans as killers and kidnappers of women and children was necessary to cement their role as the antagonistic force, justifying the hero's violent retaliation.

The crisis of this narrative structure became glaringly apparent during the 1973 Oscars when Marlon Brando refused his second Oscar and sent Sacheen Littlefeather to explain that his protest was against the Manichaean, vindictive representation of Native Americans in Hollywood Westerns. Despite being met with boos and criticism from the establishment press at the time, Brando's protest succeeded in highlighting the humanity

of Native Americans, akin to what the Civil Rights Movement had achieved for African Americans a decade earlier. Brando noted in an interview that the goal was to shift the perception of Native Americans from "the other" to human beings with their own narratives and complexities.

Desperate to save the genre, producers began to reconfigure the traditional Western narrative, while still preserving its Manichaean structure. Films such as *A Man Called Horse* (1970) and *Little Big Man* (1970) emerged, portraying American and European settlers as the villains. However, these efforts were ultimately insufficient to salvage the genre. The core problem lay in the ethical discourse, not merely the historical elements they attempted to portray. Westerns, at their best, are epic films that delve into profound moral and existential questions, as exemplified by *Dances with Wolves* (1990) and *True Grit* (2010).

In response to these evolving perspectives, I have written a screenplay titled *The Bloodthirsty Making of America: The Defeat of Native America* (Stanley, 2022). This screenplay aims to address the discrepancies in cinema's portrayal of Native American history, offering a narrative that respects the complexities and humanity of Indigenous peoples. By moving away from a strictly Manichaean framework, the goal is to provide a more nuanced and historically accurate representation.

The transformation of the Western genre and its ethical discourse highlights the broader cultural shift towards recognizing and respecting the narratives of marginalized communities.

The Manichaean discourse, with its clear-cut division between good and evil, is being challenged by stories that embrace complexity and ambiguity, reflecting a more inclusive and multifaceted understanding of history and humanity.

Westerns faded with discretion in order to be revamped into fantastic/symbolic action films[33].

The Idea

The seed of any film is the idea. The first impression in the artist's mind should be expressed as a conflict, an image, or a dialogue. Lajos Egri saw in every play or film the demonstration of a premise[34]. Without reducing art to forensics, we may profit from Egri's dialectical approach to creativity. We may formulate the main conflict of a film, for instance, by presenting the thesis and the antithesis of a popular proverb. As all proverbs are consolidated by experience, we can pronounce it as the synthesis of a dialectical process. Let's take a popular maxim:

Curiosity killed the cat

Most proverbs work at the symbolic level; a curious mind should translate such

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33 Cfr. Santander, Hugo (2024). Ética y Estética del Cinema. Stanley.

34 Egri, L. (1960). The Art of Dramatic Writing: Its Basis in the Creative Interpretation of Human Motives. Simon and Schuster.

abstraction into concrete facts. The general concept should be presented on a more particular level:

Too many questions may get you into trouble

Now we are required to produce a thesis and an antithesis at both abstract and concrete levels.

Dialectics of the idea

Thesis	Antithesis	Synthesis
Abstract level		
The cat was curious about the ham in the Ogre's kitchen.	The Ogre kills any animal who approaches his ham.	Curiosity killed the cat.
Concrete level		
Asked someone too many questions and you get into trouble.	I can profit from information on other's affairs	Your questions get you into trouble

The concrete dialectical triad coincides with the main plot of *Chinatown (Polanski, 1974),* a neo-noir mystery film that revolves around private investigator J.J. "Jake" Gittes. He is hired by a woman claiming to be Evelyn Mulwray to investigate her husband's infidelity. As Gittes delves deeper into the case, he discovers a complex web of deceit, corruption, and murder tied to the Los Angeles water supply.

Main Plot Points:

1. **Hired by "Evelyn Mulwray":** Gittes is hired by a woman posing as Evelyn Mulwray to investigate her husband's alleged affair.
2. **The Real Evelyn Mulwray:** Gittes meets the real Evelyn Mulwray and realizes he's been duped.
3. **Hollis Mulwray's Murder:** Hollis Mulwray, the chief engineer for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, is found dead.
4. **Water Corruption:** Gittes uncovers a scheme involving the manipulation of the city's water supply for profit.
5. **Family Secrets:** Gittes discovers shocking family secrets, including incest and corruption involving Evelyn's father, Noah Cross.
6. **Tragic Ending:** The film concludes tragically in Chinatown, with Gittes unable to save Evelyn or bring Cross to justice.

Chinatown draws heavily from classic film noir elements, including:

1. **The Maltese Falcon (1941):** Features a private detective hired by a femme fatale unravelling a complex mystery.
2. **Double Indemnity (1944):** Explores themes of corruption and moral ambiguity.
3. **Out of the Past (1947):** Involves a detective drawn into a web of deceit and betrayal.
4. **The Big Sleep (1946):** Showcases a detective uncovering layers of crime and corruption.

Polanski's *Chinatown* not only honours these noir traditions but also elevates them with its intricate plot, moral complexity, and unforgettable tragic ending, making it a quintessential neo-noir film.

Note that the three concepts are embodied into particular characters.

Dialectics of Chinatown (Polanski, 1974)

Thesis	Antithesis	Synthesis
Abstract level		
The cat	The Ogre	The dead cat
Concrete level		
Gittes	Cross	Gittes is unable to save Evelyn or bring Cross to justice.

Once we have the idea, we can establish the theme. A theme is a single word or general concept that comprises the actions of the film. Thus, we can say that the theme of *Romeo and Juliet* (Zeffirelli, 1968) is

"Love is more powerful than death,"

and the theme of *All the President's* Men (Lumet, 1976) is

"Deceit is everywhere."

7. Waving Conflicts in writing the screenplay

How to plot conflicts, according to Chaplin

The *Poetics* of Aristotle prescribed that drama was the representation of a single complete action. But, as we already mentioned, conflict—rather than action—is the unit of dramatic representation.

Short stories are single narratives told with very few conflicts. A Novel, by contrast, is a writing of considerable length that weaves several conflicts into a single narrative. Most theatre plays, TV soap operas, and films are structured around a main conflict, able to capture the spectators' attention from beginning to end.

A Woman of Paris (Chaplin, 1923) is a film that represents 11 conflicts carefully interwoven. Each conflict triggers confrontation between a character (hero) and an external force (opponent).

Conflicts of A Woman of Paris (Chaplin, 1923)

	Conflict	Hero	Opponent
1	Marie St. Clair loves Jean Millet.	Marie	Fate (misunderstandings)
2	Marie's stepfather throws Marie out of her house.	Marie	Marie's Stepfather
3	Jean's father dies	Jean's father	Fate (sudden death)
4	Marie becomes Pierre's courtesan	Pierre	Morality
5	Marie goes to a party and ends up in Jean's apartment	Marie	Fate (she gets lost)
6	Marie and Jean are separated at the train station	Marie and Jane	Fate (interrupted conversation)
7	Jean proposes to Marie	Jean	Fate (Jean's apparent rejection of Mary,) Pierre
8	Jean rejects Marie just to appease his mother	Jean	Pierre's mother, Fate (door ajar,) Marie
9	Jean clears his name	Jean	Fate (Marie doesn't believe him)
10	Jean's mother wants to avenge his son's death	Jean's mother	Marie, Fate (The image of Marie crying before Jean)
11	Marie and Jean's mother open an orphanage	Marie and Jean's mother	Pierre

The selection of the main conflict is one of the decisive steps in the construction of

the screenplay. It also predetermines the literary viewpoint. Each conflict is subdivided into two or more segments. The juxtaposition of such segments renders the structure of the film.

Conflict number 1 also happens to be the main conflict of the film: Marie St. Clair loves Jean Millet. This conflict comprises a series of actions that are divided into several segments and intercut with the remaining conflicts to guide spectators along the film. Main conflicts are also the hook of the narrative, the backbone of the films. As such, they should be introduced at the beginning of the story. His selection answers a very basic question, which I inevitably ask my audio-visual script students at the 11 universities in the world where I have taught:

> "*Among all the conflicts in your narrative, which is the one that intrigues us the most, the one we will never forget, the one that traumatizes us?*"

Two changes of fortune at most

Aristotle alludes to the play's main conflict while prescribing the ideal duration of a tragedy in terms of changes of fortune. The action of the play must represent the transition either from happiness to unhappiness or from unhappiness to happiness. The playwright must use a single dominant conflict as the backbone of the film. It is not advisable to overwrite it with more than one change of fortune.

Many films are ruined by contravening this precept. For example, *Just Cause* (Arne Glimcher, 1995) is a film that changes its fortunes several times, making it unbelievable. The story follows lawyer Paul Armstrong (Sean Connery), who fights to free Bobby Earl Ferguson (Blair Underwood), a man sentenced to death. However, in the end, it is revealed that Bobby is actually guilty and attempts to murder Paul and his wife. This excess of twists and turns of fortune affects the coherence and credibility of the narrative.

Once we have determined which is the main conflict of the film, we can formulate the plot or storyline of the script. The plot describes a main conflict in one paragraph of three sentences: one for the beginning, a second for the middle, and a third one for the end. Each sentence should be expressed in terms of conflict. Let's take, for instance, the plot of *Star Wars* (Lucas, 1977):

> "In a faraway galaxy enslaved Princess Lia asks help from hermit Ben Obi-Wan Kenobi. Ben, with the help of young Skywalker—a farmer, and Han Solo—a mercenary, two robots and a humanlike-pet partner, launches an attack to save Princess Lia. Ben sacrifices his life, Princess Lia is set free and young Skywalker becomes Ben's heir."

We find an ascending and descending point:

a) Princess Leia asks for help;
b) She recovers her liberty.

Spectators of Star Wars witness thus a film that represents the main character's

transition from unhappiness to happiness.

Screenwriters are advised to prepare their logline or a one-line sentence of the script. The logline presents the core of the film to the spectators of the pitch. A pitch is the presentation of a screenplay or film project before a jury of producers.

According to Aristotle, a pathos (πάθος) is an unexpected violent event. As such, it can happen at any moment in the story. Car accidents, sudden catastrophes, and diseases are events that trigger fear in the public's mind. Pathos are not necessarily the turning point of the story. Still, they invigorate a film with small rapid conflicts.

Get Shorty (Sonnenfeld, 1995), for instance, starts with a nose violently broken, a head cut by a bullet, and the sudden death of a Mafioso. Raymond Chandler famously advised writers to implement a pathos when he said that when in doubt, had a man come through the door with a gun in his hand.

A recognition (ἀναγνώρισις) is often the turning point in a film. Recognitions indicate the action by which the hero's mind sees an until-then hidden truth. Startling recognitions are pleasant, for they satisfy the intellect.

It is true, as Aristotle prescribed, that a play is not mainly shaped by the psychology of the characters, but rather by the emotional outpouring of dramatic actions in a particular sociological context. Modern spectators of Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1926) are unable to understand the main character's decisions without a minimum knowledge of medieval history.

Characters take decisions

Greatest characters are abnormal and rebellious: the villain, the unfit, the victim, and the prophet: Oedipus, Jesus, Hamlet, Don Quixote, Saint Joan. All the above-mentioned characters are driven by decisions.

Decisions are the concrete manifestations of a character's will, for they are choices that pave their way for further action: Oedipus decides to find out the murderer of the King, the cause of the plague that bleeds Thebes according to the oracle of Delphos; Jesus decides to return to Jerusalem, where his enemies receive the tributes of the Temple; Hamlet decides to avenge his father without consideration for his beloved ones; Don Quixote decides to end all the evilness of the world by virtue of his imagination; Saint Joan decides to free France from the yoke of the British crown. All of them achieve their goals without fear of death.

Degrees of complexity of the characters[35]

Particular	
Individual	Hamlet
Caractére	The misanthropist
Humour	Sir Toby (Twelfth Night)

35 Pavis, P. (1998). Dictionary of the theatre: Terms, concepts, and analysis (M. A. Carlson & C. Shantz, Trans.). University of Toronto Press., p. 49.

Actor	The lover
Role	The jealous lover
Type	The soldier
Condition	The merchant
Stereotype	The knavish valet
Allegory	Death
Archetype	The pleasure principle
Actant	The search for profit
General	

Polti wrote a book on characters borrowed from medieval typologies. It is also widely known that Cortázar and Calvino used to write short stories after combinations of tarot cards. Psychology and astrology can certainly furnish the imagination of the playwright, not indifferent to the challenge of composing a comedy between a mystical Aquarius woman and her schizophrenic husband. The conception of twelve diverse characters according to the Chinese horoscope can also be as entertaining as conceiving a character's fate by I-Ching hexagrams.

Patrice Pavis prescribes for theatre eleven types of character representation, arrayed from the general to the particular.

In the context of a screenplay, the primal general characters are the allegories. In *The Seventh Seal*, Bergman was challenged to represent an allegory of Death. According to his memoirs, he doubted whether his allegory could work. In the long run, the image of a bald man in black cloth became one of the most enduring symbols of cinema.

The stereotype is the derisive cartoonish representation of a group. They are the favourite subject of clowns and jesters, and they can be heard in the voices of many cartoons. Scola's *Ugly, Dirty, and Bad* (Scola, 1976) is a sarcastic take on Italian neorealism enacted by actors that incarnate stereotypes of criminals, prostitutes, and matrons.

A condition and a type are more elaborated characters, for they respond to particular traits of groups more or less accepted by society, e.g., the type of the American producer performed by Jack Palance in Godard's Contempt (1963).

A role is the representation of the member of a trade or profession, e.g., a student, a watchman, or a doctor. An actor is a role with a unique special responsibility, such as King Henry VIII in *A Man for All Seasons* (Fred Zinnemann, 1966).

The complexity of the character is greater in humour, the character, and the individual. Humour is a character that responds to a very particular temperament, such as Welles' *Othello* (1952). The humour of a psychopathic murderer was masterly enacted by Heath Ledger in Nolan's *The Dark Knight* (2008). The character corresponds to a character that acts according to a very particular belief, such as Patton in Schaffner's Patton (1970). The individual has a world of his own, as Charles Foster Kane.

Each story demands particular types of characters. Such an election determines the mood and style of the film. The characters of cinema may vary from the stereotypes of Kusturica's clowns to the complex individuals of Forman's *Amadeus* (1985).

The construction of the character has become a prolific subject of inquiry among modern scholars. Characters are made of wants (what does s/he want?) and lacks (what

does s/he lack?) A character, indeed, should have a clear intention in mind. There are no aimless characters, for even an indolent will have a goal, e.g., the desire of Malone, the hero of Beckett's eponymous novel, who just wants to be left alone.

Some actors demand biographies of the characters with the script. In order to understand the complexity of the character, we can make use of the Johari window, created by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955[36], a model that reveals the internal and external manifestations of the characters.

Johari window.

1. Open/free area	2. Blind area
3. Hidden area	4. Unknown area

The window represents four rooms. Room 1 is the part of ourselves that we see and others also see. Room 2 is the aspects that others see but we are not aware of. Room 3 is the most mysterious room, where the soul remains invisible to us and to the world. Room 4 is our private space.

Let's apply such concept to the character of Salieri, interpreted by Abraham Murray in *Amadeus*:

Salieri's personality according to the Johari window.

1. Open/free area: Friendly, calm, prudent	2. Blind area: Flatterer, boring, egocentric
3. Hidden area: Wrathful, murderous, mad	4. Unknown area: Jealous, deceitful, revengeful

1. Open/Free Area

This aspect of Salieri's personality is known both to himself and to others. In the movie, Salieri presents himself as a kind, calm, and prudent man. These qualities are visible in his courtly behaviour and interactions with other characters. His kindness and prudence help him maintain his position at court, while his calm demeanour allows him to hide his true feelings of envy and resentment towards Mozart.

2. Blind Area

This area contains aspects of Salieri known to others but not recognized by himself. Salieri may be seen as flattering, boring, and egocentric by those around him. His need

36 Luft, J., & Ingham, H. (1955). The Johari window: A graphic model of interpersonal awareness. Proceedings of the western training laboratory in group development. University of California, Los Angeles.

to praise those in power over him and his obsession with his own fame and recognition may be obvious to others, even though he might not be aware of how apparent this behaviour is.

3. Hidden Area

The hidden area includes those aspects of Salieri that he knows but hides from others. Salieri hides his anger, murderous tendencies, and madness. His anger manifests in his hatred towards Mozart, whom he sees as a divine rival who has usurped God's favour. His murderous tendencies and madness are revealed in his schemes to destroy Mozart, whom he ultimately poisons according to the film's plot.

4. Unknown Area

This area contains aspects of Salieri's personality that neither he nor others know. In the Johari Window applied to Salieri, these aspects include his jealousy, deceit, and desires for revenge that he perhaps does not fully understand himself. These characteristics may surface in moments of stress or crisis, revealing depths of his character that are not evident to him or those around him.

Abraham Murray's portrayal of Salieri in *Amadeus* allows for a rich and complex exploration of these different aspects of Salieri's personality, using the Johari Window as a framework to better understand the character and his motivations.

The Syd Field Paradigm

Freytag's Diagram		
Climax can occur before the resolution	Exposition	Introduces the setting, characters, and central conflict.
	Rising Action	The protagonist encounters obstacles and challenges as they pursue their goal.
	Climax	The turning point of the story where the protagonist faces their greatest challenge.
	Falling Action	The conflict is resolved, and the story reaches its conclusion.
	Resolution	The final outcome of the story, tying up loose ends.

The most discussed screenwriting paradigm, formulated by Syd Field in Hollywood, is a variation of Gustav Freytag's triangle, created in 1863 after Aristotle's *Poetics*. Syd Field effectively resolved the imperfections of Freytag's model. The climax, for example, should be shifted towards the end of the tragedy.

Freytag's diagram was also very much influenced by Newton's third law of motion: "Every object in a state of uniform motion tends to remain in that state of motion unless an external force is applied to it." It takes two external forces to present the plot points or turning points of the dramatic story.

Aristotle called them peripeteia (Περιπέτεια), which in ancient Greek translates to reversal of fortune. In any undisturbed story, there is a disturbance, a force that deviates the plot from the normal course of action.

Forces are unleashed either by the will of a character or by fate. Hamlet, Hedda Gabler, and Caligula are characters that unleash the forces of their own tragedies, in contrast with figures who had to stand the strokes of fate, e.g., Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, Pearl S. Buck's The Mother, Chaplin's A Woman of Paris.

Narrative Structure	Stages	Syd Field Paradigm	Description (Freytag equivalent)
Minute 1	Hook	Grabs the audience's attention and introduces the protagonist's world.	Exposition
Minutes 1-24 to 30	Act I	Introduces the central conflict and establishes the protagonist's goal.	Rising Action
Minute 30	Plot Point 1	A significant event that disrupts the protagonist's world and forces them to take action.	Inciting Incident
Minutes 30-90 to 95	Act II	The protagonist actively pursues their goal and faces challenges.	Climax or Confrontation
Climax at the very end	Plot Point 2	Another major event that raises the stakes and forces the protagonist to adapt.	Falling Action
Minutes 90-95	Act III	Climax. The protagonist confronts the main antagonist in a final showdown.	Dénouement. Resolution

The Frame

To develop the ideas about the frame extensively, let's first describe what the frame is in a film and how it differs from other structural elements like maps.

In film, the frame acts as an introduction that sets the tone, context, and anticipates the conflicts that will unfold throughout the movie. Unlike a map, which is an external and more abstract representation of thematic structure, the frame is an integral and organic component of the narrative. Typically, the frame is presented at the beginning of the film, providing the audience with a clue about what to expect. However, it can also be interwoven throughout the film or reappear at the end to conclude the story.

Examples of Frames in Cinema

1. "Tartuffe" (1925) by Murnau:

In this film, the frame is presented as a film projection before the interaction between the father and his lover. This frame sets the tone and context of the narrative, suggesting the deceptive and manipulative nature of the characters.

2. "Citizen Kane" (1941) by Orson Welles:

One of the most famous frames in cinema history is the newsreel sequence at the beginning of "Citizen Kane". This sequence provides a synopsis of Charles Foster Kane's life, establishing the central conflict surrounding the mystery of "Rosebud". This frame not only introduces the main character but also plants the seed of curiosity in the audience.

3. "1900" (1976) by Bertolucci:

The film opens with a shocking scene: a couple massacred by peasants. This frame sets a dark tone and foreshadows the exploration of the social and political circumstances that led to this violence. This beginning situates the audience in the historical context of

Italy during World War II and the fall of Mussolini.

4. "For Your Eyes Only" (1981):

In this film, the frame appears as the conclusion of a previous conflict, the struggle between James Bond and Blofeld, his nemesis, providing a sense of continuity and anticipation for the protagonist's new mission.

5. "The Maltese Falcon" (1941) by Huston:

The film begins with a historical note that provides context about the Maltese Falcon, the central object of the search in the movie. This historical frame helps establish the importance of the object and its background.

6. "Monsieur Hire" (1989) by Leconte and "Blue Velvet" (1986) by Lynch:

In detective genres, frames often involve the discovery of a corpse. For example, in "Monsieur Hire", the film begins with the image of a girl lying in the grass, while in "Blue Velvet", a severed ear is found near the father's corpse. These frames generate intrigue and set the tone for the mystery that will unfold.

The Map

Maps in cinematic narrative serve as structural guides that help categorize and organize the conflicts and themes of the film. They are often used to provide structure and coherence to films that may otherwise seem disjointed. Maps can be spatial or temporal and typically appear before the film titles or as visual and textual elements within the film.

Examples of Maps in Cinema

1. "The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara" (2003):

Directed by Errol Morris, "The Fog of War" stands out for its evocative title that acts as a detailed conceptual map to explore the complexity and implications of Robert S. McNamara's decisions. Each of the eleven lessons not only reveals fundamental aspects of McNamara's life and career but also provides a clear and cohesive narrative structure that guides the viewer through the complexity of his political and military decisions, as well as their impact on global politics.

The Eleven Lessons from the Documentary

1. Begin with reason, not hatred: McNamara emphasizes the importance of basing decisions on reason and analysis, not destructive emotions like hatred.
2. Rationalize the analytics: The need to use data and analysis to inform and justify decisions, especially in crisis situations.
3. Militarism, always problematic: Reflections on the limitations and consequences of using military force as a political tool.
4. Maximum output with minimum resources: The importance of efficiency and effective resource management in military and policy planning.
5. Seek to see your enemies more clearly as people: McNamara's warning about dehumanizing adversaries in times of conflict.
6. Rationalize from your adversary's perspective: The need to understand the motivations and perspectives of the enemy for effective negotiation and conflict

resolution.

7. Make a record of the errors in battle: The importance of learning from mistakes and avoiding costly repetitions in military strategy.
8. Value your mind: The importance of knowledge and personal reflection in making ethical and political decisions.
9. Be prepared to re-measure your fight: The need to constantly adapt and revise strategies and policies in response to changes in geopolitical context.
10. Never say never: McNamara's warning against rigidity and lack of adaptability in politics and strategy.
11. You cannot change people's minds, almost the occasion in which their actions are: Reflections on human nature and the difficulty of changing deeply held beliefs and actions.

Each lesson serves as a thematic chapter and critical reflection on U.S. policies during the Cold War and the Vietnam War, showing how decisions made under pressure can have lasting and often unforeseen impacts, as well as the responsibility and ethical consequences of political decisions.

2. "Manatí" (Santander, 2005), or the Realistic Documentary:

In the documentary "Manatí" (Santander, 2005), a map of "twelve sketches of an underdeveloped and happy town" is structured, a paradoxical subtitle that warns against the common melodramatic documentary in Hispanic-American production since Buñuel's "Las Hurdes" (1933). This approach is analysed in Gilles Deleuze's "Cinema 1: The Movement-Image", where Buñuel is seen as a paradigm of naturalistic cinema. Deleuze concludes that naturalism immerses its protagonists in closed worlds where their annihilation by social forces seems inevitable.

According to Deleuze, oppression is voluntary, reflected in the XV card of the Marseille Tarot, The Devil, where slaves are chained despite their shackles remaining open. Hunger is, certainly, a social reality, but if it were as destructive as so many documentary melodramas have portrayed it, the world would not have the 8.1 billion people that inhabit it today. Savater reminds us in "Ethics for Amador", that we always have the freedom to do whatever we want:

> "When anyone insists on denying that men are free, I advise you to apply the test of the Roman philosopher. In ancient times, a Roman philosopher argued with a friend who denied him human freedom and assured that all men have no choice but to do what they do. The philosopher took his cane and began to hit him with all his strength. "Stop it, that's it, don't hit me anymore!" the other told him. And the philosopher, without stopping spanking him, continued arguing: «Aren't you saying that I am not free and that what I do I have no choice but to do? Well then, don't waste your time asking me to stop: I'm automatic.» Until the friend

recognized that the philosopher could freely stop hitting him[37].”

Buñuel stands out for initiating the naturalistic melodramatic documentary, where the poor are victims of the social system. A contemporary example is "Chircales" (1972), directed by Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva, who import these precepts to the Colombian Andes. The documentary reveals the harsh realities of child laborers in brick manufacturing, an exploited and marginalized group in Colombia.

The documentary "Gamín" (1978), directed by Ciro Durán, is another concrete example of this naturalistic approach. Durán focuses on the lives of street children in Bogotá, known as "gamines", showing how the social and economic system marginalizes them and denies them opportunities for development.

Carlos Mayolo reacted to this surge by labelling naturalistic documentaries as "pornomiseria" or a morbid fascination with hunger:

> "... poverty became a striking theme and therefore merchandise, easily saleable, especially abroad, where poverty is the counterpart of the opulence of consumers[38]."

In "Manatí" (2005), Santander presents us through twelve retablos the daily life of an impoverished community that, nevertheless, manages to lead a dignified life in a forgotten corner of the Colombian Atlantic coast. The presentation of twelve retablos at the beginning of the film allows the audience to focus their attention on each one effectively.

No	Retablo	Duration (mm:ss)
-	Preamble	9:58:21
1/12	Health	10:47:03
2/12	Peace	10:36:26
3/12	Labour union	8:37:27
4/12	Spirits	10:27:29
5/12	Land	7:24:25
6/12	Education	9:14:25
7/12	Jaime	11:32:18
8/12	Youth	9:15:22
9/12	Asogama	9:33:00
10/12	Ethics	4:53:29
11/12	Economy	4:55:21
12/12	Manatí	6:10:26

37 Savater, F. (2000). Ética para Amador. México, D.F.: Ariel., p. 30.

38 Manifiesto de la pornomiseria, 1978. Texto escrito por Luis Ospina y Carlos Mayolo con motivo de la première de Agarrando pueblo en el cine Action République en París.

The documentary recounts the social problems of a community besieged by undeclared civil war and affected by guerrillas, paramilitaries, drug traffickers, and common criminals.

Inspired by the life of Jaime Santander SJ (1925-1975), the documentary highlights his work as a Jesuit priest and leader of agrarian reform, who challenged the political, social, and religious structures of his time in Colombia.

Jaime, chaplain in Manatí, was the second priest to organize the first cooperatives of farmers and fishermen on the Colombian coast, following the model of collective organization he had witnessed in Israel. His legacy includes the development of a cooperative and an agricultural university in Manatí, peaceful alternatives to armed struggle and social exploitation promoted by revolutionary and reactionary groups.

The documentary filmmaker offers a diachronic analysis that spans from the 1960s to 2005, highlighting how the peasant masses organized themselves into cooperatives after the construction of the Guájaro lagoon dam. Furthermore, he recounts his own journey through a personal diary, showing a parallel temporal map that goes from his arrival by plane to Santa Marta to his departure by canoe from Manatí, reflecting his life commitment. for truth and honesty.

Both frames and maps are introduced within the first five minutes of a film, building anticipation and providing a narrative anchor for the audience. The anticipation created by framing is similar to the excitement experienced after watching a movie trailer, preparing the viewer for the journey that is about to begin.

Frames serve as introductory scenes that outline and anticipate conflicts in a film, while maps act as structural guides that categorize and organize themes and conflicts. Both elements help capture the viewer's attention, establishing tone, context and narrative coherence, ensuring the audience is immersed and engaged from the beginning to the end of the story.

Frames should be seamlessly integrated into the narrative so as not to appear forced or contrived. They should reflect and foreshadow the central themes and conflicts without revealing too much.

It is crucial to balance the information provided in the framework with the development of the story, avoiding excessive exposition that may bore the audience.

Innovating in the presentation of frames can make a film memorable and distinctive, such as the use of newsreel footage or historical notes.

Adapting the use of frames and maps to different genres can enhance the effectiveness of the narrative, such as the use of body discovery frames in mystery or detective films.

Synopsis and scaletta

After solidifying a film's theme, idea, and plot, screenwriters develop the outline or synopsis. This summary, written in the simple present tense, chronicles the film's events with a beginning, middle, and end. While most producers accept a one-page synopsis, some require a more detailed treatment, typically four pages or longer. Mario Puzo first wrote Coppola's "The Godfather" (1972) in 1964 as a film treatment.

Following the initial development stages, screenwriters craft the outline or synopsis using a framework that emphasizes Cause, Conflict, and Consequence as pivotal elements. This approach shifts focus from a linear narrative summary to a structure highlighting the causal relationships, conflicts, and consequences that drive the story forward.

Cause: The trigger or catalyst that propels the story. This section introduces the primary characters, their motivations, and the circumstances that set the narrative in motion. Flashbacks, a narrative device unknown to Aristotle (who established the beginning-middle-end structure), allow for flexibility in placing the Cause within the story. It serves as the foundation, establishing the context for conflicts and character development.

Conflict: The core element around which the narrative revolves. Conflicts encompass the challenges, obstacles, and tensions that characters face as they pursue their goals and navigate the story's events. This section, often used as a hook at the beginning of the synopsis, delves into the escalating conflicts that intensify as the story progresses, driving character development and thematic exploration.

Consequence: The outcomes and repercussions of the conflicts and decisions made by the characters throughout the screenplay. This section explores how events unfold and resolve, shaping the characters' arcs and leaving lasting impacts on the story's world. It provides closure while also allowing space for reflection on the thematic implications of the narrative journey.

Once the Cause-Conflict-Consequence framework is established in the synopsis, comes the scene breakdown, often referred to as "scene cards" or "scaletta" (Italian for "ladder), a sequence of the scene headings of the film. These summaries typically include the setting, main characters, and the action that unfolds.

They used to be typically written on small cards, and provide a tangible tool for screenwriters to rearrange and refine the narrative structure before the first draft, but nowadays, screenwriters such as myself prefer to organize them in excel and to play with them with the help of AI, in order to decide the most intriguing order of the scenes.

This iterative process allows for experimentation with pacing, character dynamics, and thematic resonance, ensuring that each scene contributes effectively to the overarching framework.

Structure (synopsis and scaletta,) then, acts as the skeleton supporting a screenplay's action and narration, while dialogue breathes life into the drama.

Dialogue as a Tool for Conflict

Conversation in screenwriting shouldn't merely inform the audience; it should provoke thought and emotion. This idea resonates with Gilles Deleuze's prescription that

all dialogues are schizophrenic:

> "This is why there is always something mad, schizophrenic, in a conversation taken for itself (with bar conversations, lovers' conversations, money conversations, or small talk as its essence). Psychiatrists have studied the conversation of schizophrenics, with its mannerisms, its interactional bringing closer and putting at a distance, but all conversation is schizophrenic, conservation is a model of schizophrenia, not the other way round[39]."

Deleuze's assertion points to the inherently fragmented and multi-layered nature of dialogue, where multiple perspectives and underlying conflicts coexist. This perspective aligns with the concept of dialogue as "L'Azione Parlata" (Spoken Action), as advocated by Luigi Pirandello. Pirandello emphasized that dialogue in playwriting should encapsulate action compressed into powerful sentences, making each line charged with meaning and potential conflict.

Deleuze, a philosopher known for his complex theories on cinema and literature, believed that the physical actions traditionally depicted in cinema were often overshadowed by the surrealistic nature of flashbacks and the incongruous nature of remembrance, as it had been depicted by Proust. He argued that the fragmented and non-linear nature of memory introduced a new dimension to storytelling, one that traditional physical actions couldn't fully capture. However, Deleuze's focus on the visual and surreal sometimes overlooked the synthetic power of words, which can convey deep meaning and drive the narrative forward even before the audience is presented with visual cues.

To illustrate the power of dialogue, let's compare a simple exchange between two characters on stage with a more tension-filled interaction crafted by Tennessee Williams in his play *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1949).

Simple Exchange
BLANCHE: Hello. My name is Blanche.
STANLEY: Hello. I'm Stanley.

Tennessee Williams' Version
BLANCHE: You must be Stanley. I'm Blanche.
STANLEY: Stella's sister.

In the simple exchange, the dialogue merely conveys information—the names of the characters. There's no tension, no subtext, and no deeper meaning. The interaction is flat and purely functional.

In contrast, Tennessee Williams' version is loaded with subtext and tension. When

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39 Deleuze, G. (1986). Cinema (H. Tomlinson & R. Galeta, Trans.) (Vol. 2). University of Minnesota Press., p. 230.

Blanche says, "You must be Stanley," it suggests she has preconceived notions or has heard about Stanley, setting up an expectation. Stanley's response, "Stella's sister," immediately positions Blanche in relation to another character, indicating that Stanley's perception of Blanche is already influenced by his relationship with Stella. This brief exchange sets the stage for the complex dynamics and conflicts that will unfold between the characters, highlighting how dialogue can be both informative and provocative.

Pirandello's idea of dialogue as spoken action underscores the importance of every line contributing to the story's forward momentum:

> " In every one of our actions, there is always the whole being; what is manifest is only in relation to another immediate act or one that appears immediate; but at the same time, it refers to the totality of the being; it is, in short, like one face of a polyhedron that coincides with the respective face of another, without excluding the other faces that look in every direction… Now this prodigy can occur under one condition: that is, to find the word that is the action itself spoken, the living word that moves, the immediate expression, innate with the action, the unique phrase that can only be that one, appropriate to that character in that specific situation: words, expressions, phrases that are not invented, but born when the author has truly empathized with his creation to feel them as they feel, to want them as they want[40].”

Dialogue isn't just about characters exchanging pleasantries or information; it's about revealing hidden desires, conflicts, and motivations that induce us to perceive their whole history, soul and fate. In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, every word exchanged between Blanche and Stanley carries weight, reflecting their personalities, their histories, and the inevitable clash between them.

Academics often forget, as Derrida pointed out, that before any representation there is the spoken word. The aphorism "a picture is worth a thousand words" suggests the power of visual imagery to convey complex ideas and emotions efficiently. However, it's equally valid to consider that "a word may reveal us images out of this world." Language and narrative can certainly invoke vivid mental images and scenarios that transcend the ordinary.

Words possess a unique ability to stimulate imagination and evoke sensory experiences in the minds of readers or listeners. Unlike a static image, which presents a singular moment frozen in time, words can paint dynamic and evolving scenes that

40 Pirandello, L. (1899, May 7). “In ogni nostro atto è sempre tutto l’essere; quello che si manifesta è soltanto relazione a un altro atto immediato o che appare immediato; ma nello stesso tempo si riferisce alla totalità dell’essere; è insomma come la faccia d’un poliedro che combaci con la faccia rispettiva d’un altro, pur non escludendo le altre facce che guardano per ogni verso… Ora questo prodigio può avvenire a un solo patto: che si trovi cioè la parola che sia l’azione stessa parlata, la parola viva che muova, l’espressione immediata, connaturata con l’azione, la frase unica, che non può esser che quella, propria a quel dato personaggio in quella data situazione: parole, espressioni, frasi che non s’inventano, ma che nascono, quando l’autore si sia veramente immedesimato con la sua creatura fino a sentirla com’essa si sente, a volerla com’essa si vuole.” L’azione parlata. Marzocco. Leggi e ascolta. Voce di Giuseppe Tizza. Retrieved from [https://www.pirandelloweb.com/l-azione-parlata/]

unfold across time and space. Through the careful selection of words, writers can describe intricate details, evoke specific moods, and transport audiences to fantastical realms or emotional landscapes.

For instance, consider the opening lines of a novel that describe an alien landscape with purple skies, shimmering rivers of silver, and towering crystalline structures. These words not only depict a visual scene but also invite readers to envision an entirely new world, complete with its own laws of physics, inhabitants, and cultures. The power of language lies not only in its descriptive capability but also in its ability to engage the reader's imagination actively, prompting them to participate in the creation of mental images.

Moreover, words can transcend the limitations of physical reality by exploring abstract concepts, emotions, and perspectives that go beyond what can be captured in a single image. Poets, for example, often use language to convey profound truths or emotions that defy visual representation, such as love, grief, or existential angst. Through metaphors, symbols, and allegories, words can illuminate aspects of human experience that are intangible yet deeply felt.

In literature and storytelling, authors harness the transformative potential of words to craft narratives that resonate on multiple levels. By weaving together plot, character development, and thematic exploration, writers construct intricate tapestries of words that unfold like cinematic sequences in the minds of their audience. Each word becomes a brushstroke in the canvas of imagination, inviting readers to perceive, interpret, and engage with the narrative in their unique ways.

Words transcend mere description; they inspire, provoke, and transport us to realms both familiar and extraordinary. Deleuze's notion of the schizophrenic nature of dialogue further emphasizes this point. In a well-crafted script, characters' dialogues often reflect their internal conflicts and fractured psyches, creating a multi-dimensional narrative that resonates with the audience on a deeper level.

Effective screenwriting leverages dialogue not just to inform but to provoke audiences with expressions rich in subtext, conflict, and meaning. While some academics may have prioritized the visual aspects of storytelling, it's crucial to recognize that dialogue can synthesize these elements, providing a bridge between the audience's perception and the characters' internal worlds. Words can evoke images, suggest actions, and hint at emotions that aren't immediately visible on screen. This synthetic force of the word is what makes dialogue such a powerful tool in screenwriting.

Tips for the Screenwriting craft

These are some tips compiled from different sources on the craft of screenwriting.

1. Visualize a scene in terms of images and physical movements; then write it.
2. Describe the actions in short sentences, written in the simple present tense of the indicative mood.
3. Write in concrete terms. Avoid abstractions that don't belong to the visual representation of the screenplay.
4. Don't create isolated characters. Each actor should be included in at least two scenes of the film.

5. Reduce the number of characters; many actions executed by extras can be executed by secondary characters.

6. Props and gadgets that play a decisive role in the story should be presented at the beginning of the play.

7. Conceive dialogues that haven't been heard before.

8. As for the extension of the dialogues: a page should be abridged in a paragraph; a paragraph in a sentence; a sentence in a word.

9. Start the screenplay with a scene of expectation that won't be answered before the middle of the film.

10. Don't procrastinate for more than 5 minutes. If necessary, create new sub-conflicts.

11. Write wordless scenes every four minutes.

12. Use software for screenwriting and film production. Screenwriting software provides the margins, conventions, and fonts for creative dramatic writing, as inherited from the silent film era. They are automatically set up for each new document, be it for theatre, film, or TV.

8. Acting[41]

Reflecting on the limitations of theatre, Grotowski developed a new approach to theatrical representation. The increasing demands of naturalism were surrendered to the film industry, and with a touch of irony, the aesthetics of Poor Theatre were praised by the press.

Like Aeschylus, Shakespeare, and Molière, Grotowski placed utmost importance on the actor. There is no theatre without acting, for it is acting and only acting that transforms the world into a stage. Grotowski's emphasis on the actor's role can be further explained by considering the thoughts of these notable playwrights and their focus on acting.

As one of the earliest playwrights in ancient Greece, Aeschylus focused on the power of the actor to convey deep moral and philosophical themes. His plays often featured a chorus, but the primary narrative and emotional impact relied heavily on the actors' performances. Aristotle noted that dramatic art, as we know it today, was born the day Aeschylus introduced the second actor on stage. The legacies of the great Greek playwright and theatre director—as Borges beautifully pointed out—include not only the whispers of Electra but also the protests of Hecuba, the roars of Othello, and the tears of Willy Loman.

Naturalistic representations of dramatic relationships owe much to Aeschylus, whose influence extends to cinema. The tears of Holly Golightly and the desolation of Rick Blaine owe as much to the mastery of the close-up and the depth of field as to the ancient craft of acting.

Acting according to Shakespeare

William Shakespeare's works are renowned for their complex characters and intricate emotional landscapes. His plays demand a high level of skill from actors, who must navigate the rich language and profound psychological depth of the characters without overdoing their expression: "Overdoing it defeats the purpose of acting, which is to reflect reality, to show virtue its own image, and to depict the era and its pressures accurately."

Shakespeare understood that the actor's craft was crucial to bringing the text to life to "the judicious," as stated in Hamlet's speech as theatre director, to a troupe of actors he has hired for a play (Act 3 Scene 2). Let's rewrite Shakespeare's masterclass on acting in modern English:

HAMLET

Speak the lines the way I taught you, with ease and clarity. Don't overdo it, like some actors do, or I'd rather have the town crier deliver my lines. And don't

41 Cfr. Santander Ferreira, Hugo Noël (2024). Express Acting. Learn to act immediately. Stanley.

wave your arms around too much. Use gestures sparingly; even in the height of emotion, you need to maintain control to keep it smooth. It really annoys me to see an actor overact and tear the emotion to shreds, just to impress the uneducated audience who only understand loud noise and exaggerated actions. I'd punish someone for overacting like that; it's more over-the-top than anything. Please, avoid doing that.

But don't be too tame either. Use your judgment: match your actions to the words, and the words to your actions. Most importantly, stay true to the natural expression of emotion. Overdoing it defeats the purpose of acting, which is to reflect reality, to show virtue its own image, and to depict the era and its pressures accurately. Overacting, even if it makes the unskilled laugh, will only make the discerning audience unhappy. Their criticism should matter more to you than the approval of a whole theatre full of others.

I've seen actors who are highly praised, yet they neither sound nor move like any real person. They strut and shout so much that it seems like some of nature's apprentices made them, and did a terrible job of it. They mimic humanity so badly.

Fix it completely. And for the comedians, let them stick to the script. Some try to make the audience laugh by adding their own jokes, which distracts from the play's important moments. That's despicable and shows a pathetic ambition in the fool who does it. Now, get ready.

Hamlet's teachings to actors can be synthetized in 8 main precepts:

Action tips from Shakespeare

1. Speak lines with ease and clarity, avoiding overdoing it like some actors who may exaggerate emotions.
2. Avoid excessive arm waving and use gestures sparingly to maintain control and smoothness in delivery.
3. Maintain a balance in acting by matching actions to words and words to actions, staying true to natural expression of emotion.
4. Reflect reality in acting and show virtue its own image without overdoing it, as overacting defeats the purpose of depicting emotions accurately.
5. Prioritize the feedback of discerning audience over mass approval, as overacting may only please the unskilled viewers.
6. Strive to portray characters authentically, avoiding mimicry or exaggerated movements that detract from the realism of the performance.
7. Comedians should stick to the script and avoid adding personal jokes that distract from the play's important moments.
8. Focus on delivering a performance that resonates with the audience and earns genuine appreciation for the art of acting.

Acting according to Molière

Jean Baptiste Poquelin, known as Molière, showcased in his plays the actor's ability to create humour through timing, physicality, and nuanced performances. His works

often satirized social norms and behaviours, requiring actors to embody exaggerated characters with precision and wit. The effectiveness of Molière's satire hinged on the actors' ability to balance comedy with the social mannerisms of his time.

For example, in "Les Femmes Savantes" ("The Learned Ladies"), Molière captures this balance perfectly. Consider the scene between the poets Trissotin and Vadius in Act III, Scene III, where they initially flatter each other excessively, only to quickly descend into a spat filled with mutual insults upon realizing one of them unwillingly scorned the other's poem. This scene highlights the actors' need for impeccable timing and delivery to switch seamlessly from flattery to outrage:

Trissotin: Your verses have beauties that no others have.
Vadius: The Graces and Venus reign in all of yours.
Trissotin: You have a free style and a fine choice of words.
Vadius: Everywhere in your works we see ethos and pathos.
Trissotin: We have seen eclogues from you with a style That surpasses the sweet charms of Theocritus and Virgil.
Vadius: Your odes have a noble, gallant, and sweet air, Which leaves your Horace far behind.
Trissotin: Is there anything as loving as your little songs?
Vadius: Can anything equal the sonnets you write?
Trissotin: Nothing is more charming than your little rondeaux.
Vadius: Nothing is so full of wit as all your madrigals.
Trissotin: Especially in ballads, you are admirable.
Vadius: And in bouts-rimés, I find you adorable.
Trissotin: If France could recognize your worth,
Vadius: If the age did justice to fine minds,
Trissotin: You would ride through the streets in a gilded carriage.
Vadius: The public would erect statues in your honour.
Trissotin: Hum! Here is a ballad, and I want you to…
Vadius, to Trissotin: Have you seen a certain little sonnet About the fever that holds Princess Uranie?
Trissotin: Yes; yesterday it was read to me in a company.
Vadius: Do you know the author?
Trissotin: No; but I know very well That, to be blunt, his sonnet is worth nothing.
Vadius: Many people, however, find it admirable.
Trissotin: That does not prevent it from being miserable. And, if you have seen it, you will agree with me.
Vadius: I know that I am not at all of that opinion, And that few people are capable of such a sonnet.
Trissotin: Heaven preserve me from making similar ones!
Vadius: I maintain that one cannot make a better one; And my main reason is that I am the author.
Trissotin: You?

Vadius: Me.

Trissotin: I don't know then how it happened.

Vadius: It was unlucky not to please you.

Trissotin: Either my mind was distracted when I listened, Or the reader ruined the sonnet. But let's leave this talk and see my ballad.

Trissotin: The ballad, to my taste, is a dull thing: It is no longer in fashion; it reeks of old times.

Vadius: The ballad, however, charms many people.

Trissotin: That does not prevent me from disliking it.

Vadius: It is not any worse for that.

Trissotin: It has marvellous attractions for pedants.

Vadius: Yet we see that it does not please you.

Trissotin: You foolishly attribute your qualities to others. (They both stand up.)

Vadius: You very impertinently cast yours at me.

Trissotin: Go, little scribbler, dauber of paper.

Vadius: Go, rhymester of trifles, disgrace of the profession.

Trissotin: Go, ragman of writings, impudent plagiarist.

Vadius: Go, pedant…[42]

Acting tips from Molière

These elements are key to understanding Molière's method as seen in characters like Tartuffe, Harpagon, and Don Giovanni:

1. **Impeccable Timing**: Master the art of timing transitions between emotions and dialogues, as seen in how characters in Molière's plays swiftly move from flattery to outrage.
2. **Precision in Delivery**: Ensure clarity and precision in delivering lines, especially when portraying exaggerated characters or engaging in verbal sparring.
3. **Physical Comedy**: Embody physicality that complements the character's personality and actions, enhancing the comedic effect through gestures, facial expressions, and movement.
4. **Balanced Satire**: Maintain a balance between comedy and the social commentary embedded in Molière's satire, understanding the underlying nuances of the characters' interactions.
5. **Adaptability and Reactivity**: Be adaptable to changes in dialogue and circumstances during scenes, reacting naturally to the evolving dynamics with fellow actors.
6. **Character Depth**: Explore the depth of characters beyond their surface traits, understanding their motivations and flaws to enrich the portrayal.
7. **Versatility in Emotion**: Display a range of emotions authentically, from exaggerated admiration to genuine indignation, capturing the complexity of human responses.
8. **Rhythmic Dialogue**: Embrace the rhythm and musicality inherent in Molière's dialogues, which often contribute to the comedic timing and overall theatricality.
9. **Ability to Portray Hypocrisy**: Skilfully depict hypocrisy in characters, highlighting the contrast between their outward behaviour and inner motives, a hallmark of many Molièrean protagonists.
10. **Conflict Between Manners and Envy (Rage)**: Showcase the internal conflict between maintaining social decorum and succumbing to envy or rage, as exemplified in characters like Harpagon from "The Miser".
11. **Shifts Between Admiration to Envy, Love to Hate**: Navigate the transitions between admiration turning into envy and love evolving into hate, portraying these emotional shifts convincingly.

Molière's method challenges actors to embody characters with depth and theatrical flair. These characters exemplify Molière's keen insight into human nature, blending humour with social critique through nuanced performances.

Acting the Voice of God

In the context of 20th-century cinema, the interaction between spectator and actor took on new dimensions. Celebrities and stars often overshadowed the plots of the films they appeared in, much like how Grotowski emphasized the actor's role over other theatrical elements. In both theatre and cinema, the presence and performance of the actor are paramount in creating a compelling and engaging narrative.

Film relies heavily on actors. Abstract films and video art are no exceptions to this rule; their directors are the new puppeteers of images and sounds. We experience the omnipresence of actors in abstract forms, just as we experience the omnipresence of artists in objets trouvés.

Some spectators may discover performers in the textures and shapes of Oskar Fischinger's *Motion Painting No. 1* (1947); most will struggle to make sense of the film, turning the director, by their sensitivity, into the main actor. The widespread use of the "Voice of God" in mainstream documentaries also corroborates the ascendancy of the actor.

The "Voice of God" narration style in documentaries refers to an authoritative, often omniscient voice that provides commentary, context, or explanation, without being seen on screen. This technique is named for its resemblance to a divine or all-knowing perspective, guiding the viewer's understanding of the content.

The term "Voice of God" emerged in the early days of documentary filmmaking. It became a hallmark of the expository mode of documentaries, which aims to inform and educate the audience through a direct, didactic approach.

The style can be traced back to the silent films' intertitles, which were conceived to import to cinema the omniscient narrator of most 19th-century novelists, such as Charles Dickens and Honoré de Balzac. One of the pioneering figures, John Grierson,

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42 Molière. (1672). Les Femmes savantes [The Learned Ladies], Act III, Scene III. In Œuvres de Molière (Vol. 8, pp. 123-124). Paris: Librairie Larousse.

often credited with coining the term "documentary," used this technique in his works like *Drifters* (1929) and *Night Mail* (1936).

In his book "Introduction to Documentary[43]," film scholar Bill Nichols discusses how the "Voice of God" narration fits within the expository mode, emphasizing its role in guiding the audience's interpretation of the film's message and providing a sense of objectivity and authority.

During World War II, "Voice of God" narration became prominent in propaganda films. These films, such as Frank Capra's "Why We Fight" series[44], used authoritative narration to convey nationalistic messages and inform the public about the war efforts.

After the war, this style continued to be popular in documentaries produced by the National Film Board of Canada and the British Broadcasting Corporation. The voice provided a sense of reliability and authority, crucial in educational and public information films. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model can be applied here to understand how authoritative narration encodes a preferred meaning, which the audience then decodes, often accepting the intended interpretation due to the perceived authority of the voice[45].

The "Voice of God" style underscores the significance of the narrator's role, often an actor whose voice lends credibility and gravitas to the film. This reflects the broader importance of actors in media, as their vocal performance can significantly influence the viewer's perception. A recognizable or well-respected voice can enhance the documentary's credibility. For instance, narrators like Sir David Attenborough in nature documentaries and Morgan Freeman in various educational films are renowned for their distinctive and authoritative voices today.

An actor's voice can evoke emotions and guide the viewer's emotional response to the content. This ability to influence the audience's feelings highlights the power and skill of the actor's performance in voice-over roles.

The widespread use of the "Voice of God" in mainstream documentaries corroborates the ascendancy of the actor by emphasizing the crucial role of vocal performance in conveying authority, credibility, and emotional depth. This narration style has a rich history in documentary filmmaking, demonstrating the power of the actor's voice in shaping the viewer's understanding and experience.

Playing Cinema

Certainly, cinema is not only about acting. All possible images are an integral part of its universe. But even a landscape or a desert must be imagined or seen by somebody. Ontologically, any person is an observer of life, or as Berkeley put it, esse est percipi ("To be is to be perceived"). Samuel Beckett's "Film" (1965) best expresses this precondition; over ten minutes, Buster Keaton desires a state of non-existence, hiding from the world.

43 Nichols, B. (2017). Introduction to Documentary (3rd ed.). Indiana University Press.
44 Capra, F. (1942-1945). Why We Fight [Film series]. U.S. War Department.
45 Hall, S. (1973). Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse. Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.

Having confronted animated and inanimate objects and the photographic symbols of his past, he confronts the universal observer, an entity incarnated, ironically, by world celebrity Buster Keaton.

Actors are the hired spokespeople for the thoughts and feelings of a poet. A persona—following the Latin etymology, is designed to project the voice of its original speaker: per-sonare (to sound through). Cinema, the Parnassus of modernity, places the actor in the spotlight, embellishing them with patterns of light and shadow, rich scenarios, costumes, decors, and the melodious voice of music.

Film scores gained importance during the transition from silent to sound cinema. The advent of sound led to an ardent romance between music and filmmaking, with silver screens flooded by singers, players, and dancers. Unfortunately, dialogue soon took precedence over music. Film, once a bachelor, married the Word with the connivance of audiences and producers. With the exception of India, musical scores lost ground in the 1960s, and singers and dancers were discreetly dismissed. Composers, however, never gave up. With the dignity of a dethroned queen, music was appointed as the ideal spectator, the rightful incarnation of the Ancient Greek Chorus.

Indeed, we long to see all events in the universe represented on a screen. Shakespeare and Calderón found the purpose of our world in representation. Centuries later, from an academic perspective, Johan Huizinga presented compelling proof of the playful nature of war to a world on the brink of destruction.

Life is a play, and the role played by the actors who nourish our dreams cannot be underestimated. They embody both what we are and what we are not. As Meryl Streep and Leonardo DiCaprio speak, we converse with them in our minds. The intensity of their emotions makes them not only spiritual but also beautiful and loyal. We share the anger of Daniel Day-Lewis, the evilness of Christoph Waltz, the anguish of Joaquin Phoenix, and the madness of Jack Nicholson.

It is true that we feel as we live, but only actors can teach us the colour and intensity of our feelings. As we might expect from a true friend, actors never hide their secrets. We see them crying, making love, and even talking to themselves.

Peter Brook is recognized for his profound influence on contemporary theatre, especially for challenging and expanding the traditional boundaries of stagecraft. His play "The Empty Space[46]" not only examines the actor's creative process, but also criticizes the rigidity and excessive realism imposed by Stanislavski's American followers. For Brook, acting should not be limited to the mere naturalistic reproduction of emotions, but should explore the depths of the human being through a broader, symbolic expression.

Brook sees actors as playmates who, through their art, explore and reveal the complexities of the human soul. Contrary to the superficial and glamorous image often projected by the media on actors, Brook emphasizes the authenticity and vulnerability that actors can convey on stage. While paparazzi and gossip journalists may focus on

46 Brook, P. (1968). The empty space: A book about the theatre: Deadly, holy, rough, immediate. Touchstone.

actors' human foibles, such as alcohol or drug use or sexual scandals, Brook sees them as artists capable of embodying and communicating deep, universal emotions that resonate with audiences.

Rather than judging a theatre director solely on the technical quality of the production, Brook values the emotional and spiritual impact that actors can achieve through their performance. His theatrical approach seeks to transcend the mundane and capture the very essence of human existence through stagecraft. Thus, Brook not only critiques the limitations of conventional realism, but also proposes a more transcendental and revealing theatre, where actors can freely explore the depths of the human condition.

Actors are also playmates. We see them rising to power, conquering nations, murdering enemies, but also with broken hearts. They may kill us, and we may kill them, but in the end, all we know is that such killings are only a game. Yes, they are merely a play.

Even so, memory keeps them in a storage where dreams and reality converge. How many times have you seen someone you think you know, only to discover they are an actor? I too have been a victim of such confusion.

Actors, priests of the world

Actors are the real priests of the world. As such, they suffered much poverty and humiliation before the discovery of cinema. Their moment came, and they became the idols of the people. Our admiration is based on the love we personally profess for them, for by sharing their sufferings and joys with us, their public, we are allowed to feel their representation.

What is acting? In the third book of "Republic," Plato distinguishes acting (μίμησις: mimesis) from narrative (διήγησις: diegesis). Mimesis can be translated first as imitation and second as creation; that is to say, mimesis is never a copy of reality but an interpretation.

Aristotle prescribed in *Poetics* that the aim of art is the cleansing of the passions (κάθαρσις). To achieve this, the actor should imitate reality to the point that audiences identify their passions as their own. In "Hamlet," Shakespeare defines acting as a "dream of passion."

I consider acting to be the varied representation of emotions according to the expectations of a film director. Satyajit Ray is emphatic on this issue: "[i]n movies, the actor is not performing to the audience like the stage actor. Here they are acting for me. I am the audience, and I will decide whether it is correct or not, enough or not."

It's true, as Gordon Craig wrote, that the art of an actor can't be compared to that of a painter or a poet. Actors are mostly instruments of ambitious writers or directors. Robert De Niro delivers in *Raging Bull* (1980) one of the finest performances in the history of acting. The screenplay is as instrumental to his aims as it is the life of Jake LaMotta and the personality of the boxer who fought his demons both inside and outside the ring.

What makes De Niro's acting so remarkable? Most critics attribute his versatility to the virtuosity of his voice and physical transformation. But a gravelly voice and physical prowess are not enough to convey the array of emotions De Niro delivers. We see LaMotta as a man with a variety of feelings: his happiness in the ring and his fury

while destroying his dressing room mirror find no other equivalent in the film. We may see him again happy and angry, but he produces different hues of these emotions. He displays a controlled rage while begging his brother for forgiveness, and his happiness when winning a fight should rather be defined as triumph.

Anger and Grief Vs. Admiration and compassion

Schopenhauer postulated that all human feelings could be summarized into two main categories within any given relationship: contempt or envy. With characteristic sarcasm of his, he suggested that these emotions form a dichotomy through which all other feelings can be understood.

Starting from this idea, we observe that these passions can trigger two basic emotions: anger and pain. Envy often leads to the temptation of anger when one perceives that others possess advantages or attributes that one desires but lacks. On the contrary, compassion can evoke the temptation to contempt when witnessing the suffering or misfortune of others. These nuanced emotions of anger and hurt can also be seen in their positive counterparts: admiration for those perceived as superior and compassion for those in need. These emotional responses are universal and shape our daily interactions, providing the raw material from which actors draw inspiration.

Whether on stage in Greek tragedies or on screen in cinema, actors adeptly embody these primal emotions with intensity and dexterity. They serve as vessels through which audiences experience the spectrum of human existence, from the heights of heroism to the depths of despair. This parallels the journey of characters in drama and film, such as iconic figures like Hamlet or Michael Corleone, who navigate complex emotional landscapes that resonate universally with human experience.

Greek tragedy, renowned for its exploration of fate, hubris, and the consequences of human actions, laid the groundwork for dramatic storytelling inherited and expanded upon by cinema. Actors in both mediums are not mere performers; they are interpreters who adeptly channel the essence of human emotions and dilemmas. Their portrayal of characters transcends individual roles to reveal the interconnectedness of human experience.

Furthermore, whether an actor embodies a tragic hero driven by pity for their own downfall or an antagonist fuelled by envy and anger towards others, these primal emotions underscore the dramatic tension that captivates audiences across cultures and eras.

The enduring power of acting lies in its ability to evoke these primal feelings and universal themes, resonating deeply with audiences who see reflections of themselves in the characters portrayed. From ancient Greek stages to modern cinema screens, actors continue to illuminate the human condition, embodying the fundamental emotions that shape our relationships and narratives.

Thus, through the art of acting, we discover the timeless truth that all fictional characters are facets of the same collective human soul.

The Emotional Partiture

A_____Z

A to Z represent the black and white ends of the emotional spectrum. The task of an actor is to reveal as many colours or feelings as possible between these extremes. While some may believe there are only a handful of emotions, such as the nine emotional personifications recognized in Indian culture—Erotic, Valorous, Furious, Terror-stricken, Pathetic, Comic, Disgusting, Marvellous, and Peaceful—the human psyche is far more nuanced. Emotions vary in intensity and blend together in infinite combinations.

Language underscores this complexity; where a linguist might label wrath, ire, anger, choler, and fury as synonyms, for David Suchet, being angry is not the same as being furious, wrathful, upset or angry.

Actors are consummate observers, drawing inspiration from their observations to create lives of their own invention, regardless of their methods. Helen Mirren believed that acting was just about what she would do in the shoes of someone else's profession. Dustin Hoffman sought to live the experience of his character to offer an authentic performance, as occurred in the torture scene of *Marathon Man* (Schlesinger, 1976), for which Hoffman decided not to sleep for several nights to reflect his character's exhaustion and terror more authentically. Sir Laurence Olivier preferred simply to "act," and his comment before torturing Hoffman in that scene is revealing:

"Dear boy, have you ever tried simply acting?"

In the previous chapter, we discussed the 11 degrees of reality compiled by the theatre semiotician Patrick Pavis. Actors can also benefit from understanding Pavis's categorization. We see performances dominated by single emotions in critically acclaimed films like *A Clockwork Orange* (Kubrick, 1971) and *Ugly, Dirty and Bad* (Scola, 1976). The intensity of Kubrick's and Scola's villains in these films may even surpass the subtle individualities depicted in *Rope* (Hitchcock, 1948) or the Netflix's series *The Crown*.

However, the "judicious" or Shakespeare-educated audience typically prefers complex characters, those capable of displaying up to nine conflicting emotions simultaneously. Such performances can be appreciated in characters like Salieri, portrayed by F. Murray Abraham in *Amadeus* (Forman, 1984), or Oskar Schindler, portrayed by Liam Neeson in *Schindler's List* (Spielberg, 1993).

The absence of truly satirical film

There is a social caution against mixing acting styles, though. For instance, it's difficult to imagine Al Pacino's Michael Corleone arguing with Jim Carrey's Ace Ventura. Such dissimilarities haven't been confronted by audiences since the Dionysian festivals, when tragic trilogies concluded with satirical plays featuring archetypal characters like succubi and nymphs. Euripides' only surviving satyr play, "Cyclops," epitomizes this contrast, blending the intense drama of the preceding tragedies with the bawdy humour and exaggerated characters typical of satyr plays.

This stark juxtaposition, while artistically valuable in its context, underlines the challenge of merging vastly different acting styles in a single narrative. To deride the

persona of a consecrated actor would be today as unfitted as inviting several presidents to interact with comedians in a TV reality show.

Rulers' power is based not on the fear, but on the love they inspired on their subjects, as Saavedra Fajardo pointed out:

> "Portugal never bared its steel nor lost respect for its kings, because it loves them deeply[47]".

And perhaps we could still learn from the Greeks the democratic value of performance. By demonstrating the flawed humanity of imposing and complex characters before the types and stereotypes of society, we face a more human portrait of reality than that fabricated by the dream factory that film has become.

The Greeks understood that the interplay between the tragic and the comedic provided a more comprehensive exploration of the human condition. Euripides, through "Cyclops," showed that the gods and heroes, despite their grandeur, are not immune to the follies and vulgarities of life. This fusion, while jarring, reveals the multifaceted nature of humanity. It compels the audience to recognize that beneath the veneer of power and divinity lies a shared, often absurd, human experience.

In modern cinema, the stark delineation between serious drama and broad comedy can sometimes limit the depth of characters and narratives. While the seamless integration of disparate styles remains a formidable challenge, it is precisely in this tension that a richer, more nuanced depiction of reality can emerge.

Just as the Dionysian festivals celebrated the spectrum of human experience, contemporary storytelling can benefit from embracing the complexity and contradictions inherent in mixing different acting styles. This approach not only honours the legacy of the ancients but also pushes the boundaries of modern performance, offering a truer reflection of the human psyche in all its dimensions.

All it would take is for a famous film director to hire a forgotten politician, say Sarközy or Boris Johnson, to act in a film of archetypes, giving the world a lesson in the evanescence of worldly attractions!

Internal and External Rhythms

After the decline of the liberal arts—that is to say, of rhetoric and theology—the dichotomy between body and soul was revamped and incorporated into the history of acting by Constantin Stanislavski (1863–1938). Through his writings, Stanislavski refers to internal and external rhythms. Internal rhythm can be defined as the emotional rhythm a person has at a determined moment: the soul. External rhythm would be the visual manifestation of that rhythm: face and body.

Audiences prefer characters in extreme survival situations, where internal

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47 "Nunca Portugal desnudó el acero ni perdió el respeto a sus reyes, porque con entrañable amor los ama". Saavedra Fajardo (1946). Idea de un Príncipe Político-Cristiano, en Obras Completas. Aguilar. p- 343.

conflicts manifest visibly “against the will” of the actors, where external and internal rhythms contend as mad “as the sea and wind, when both contend which is the mightier" (Hamlet, 4, 1.)

In the final scene of *Doubt* (2008), Meryl Streep delivers a masterful performance as Sister Aloysius Beauvier, a stern and unyielding nun who has spent the film in a relentless pursuit to expose what she believes to be the inappropriate behaviour of Father Flynn, portrayed by Philip Seymour Hoffman. Her internal struggle and the emotional authenticity of her character reach their peak in this climactic moment.

As the scene unfolds, Sister Aloysius is sitting with a young nun, Sister James, played by Amy Adams, in a quiet and dimly lit courtyard. The atmosphere is heavy with tension and unresolved conflict. Throughout the movie, Sister Aloysius has been unwavering in her conviction that Father Flynn is guilty, despite the lack of concrete evidence. Her certainty has driven her to extreme measures, ultimately leading to Father Flynn’s resignation.

In this poignant moment, Sister Aloysius, who has always appeared strong and resolute, begins to show signs of vulnerability. Her typically steely demeanour softens, and the rigid lines of her face seem to relax slightly. She speaks to Sister James in a voice that, for the first time, wavers with uncertainty and emotional weight.

Meryl Streep's performance captures the complexity of Sister Aloysius's internal turmoil. Her eyes, usually cold and piercing, are now filled with a mixture of sorrow, regret, and profound doubt. She reveals to Sister James that, despite her actions and the apparent victory in driving Father Flynn away, she is tormented by uncertainty. She confesses, “I have doubts... I have such doubts.” This admission is a stark contrast to the unwavering certainty she exhibited throughout the film.

As she utters these words, her composure begins to break. Her voice cracks, and her eyes brim with tears that she struggles to hold back. The physical manifestations of her internal conflict are subtle yet powerful: a slight tremble in her hands, a quiver in her voice, and the deep furrow of her brow. These external rhythms reflect the intense emotional battle raging within her, capturing

This scene illustrates the profound emotional authenticity that Meryl Streep brings to her role. Her ability to convey a bottomless internal turmoil while maintaining a composed exterior highlights the nuances of Sister Aloysius’s character and the broader themes of doubt and moral certainty. It leaves the audience grappling with the same questions that haunt Sister Aloysius, underscoring the film's central message about the nature of truth and conviction.

Actors feel simultaneously inside their minds and bodies. As rhythms are measured by conflict, audiences prefer extreme situations of survival, where we can appreciate in the greatest dilemmas the most contrasted representations of rhythm. A minister accused of high treason should reasonably be as frightened at the prospect of his life being in danger as a soldier sent to the war front for the first time. Conversely, a socialist murderer with an alibi at trial may be internally unconflicted (he does not regret having murdered, as he justifies it politically), while breathing loudly and shouting externally in an effort to appear distraught to his judges.

Good acting in terms of emotional intensity corresponds to the equation:

$$\frac{I+c}{E-c}$$

Where I = internal rhythm, E = external rhythm and c = conflict.
Horace's adage in *Poetics* reflects this need for genuine emotional depth in acting:

Si vis me flere, dolendum primum tibi est.
If you wish me to weep, you yourself must first feel grief.

That’s why emotions without internal conflict often ring false, as when a prattler cries forcefully to persuade us he’s suffering. Players should never forget they are but competitors in a game. They are the self-appointed victims of a ritual that celebrates both victory and defeat. Arts differ from sports in that they have no clear-cut winners. Actors, however, play the game with visible excitement. There is a sense of celebration in every movie, even in the darkest flicks. The enjoyment of a play is not in the score but in its performance.

Actors bring imaginary worlds into being. Players struggle to achieve the tension reserved for the players of the Maya ball game in which losers were sacrificed. Their imagination inspires fear or joy in their minds and bodies. The feelings of an actor are displayed in conflict with the desires of the audience, which longs for peace, love, and prosperity. Huizinga was the first writer who emphasized our eagerness to win all challenges in life. Acting is also about winning, but no longer a prize awarded by judges, but the affection of the masses. *Homo Ludens* watches plays and cinema, a source of inspiration for the performance of the play of his own life, where winning the spectators’ love is a need.

Stanislavski remains the most influential figure in acting theory. His style is anecdotal. He avoids clear-cut formulas, a fact that explains why his work has been reinterpreted by so many acting directors and academy professors. Overall, he expects from an actor sincere emotions while delivering his lines. A supple body, clear voice, and demeanour are all important for the actor, but they are subordinated to emotions and imagination.

By the end of his life, Stanislavski developed the method of Physical Actions, by which the actors' emotional intensity is triggered by the use of simple physical actions. Like Proust, Stanislavski understood that memories were attached to emotions. He recommended actors to discover the variety of small physical actions and objects able to trigger memories powerful enough to stir the emotions of the player.

Lee Strasberg (1901–1982) has become the most well-known of Stanislavski's interpreters, due to the celebrity of many of his students, e.g., James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Paul Newman. Strasberg was for nearly 30 years the director of the Actors Studio, an acting school set in New York, which is currently associated with the MFA program in Acting at Pace University. Strasberg developed The Method, a series of exercises based on Stanislavski’s writings. The most important of them is the Emotional

Memory, a technique designed to revive the traumatic moments in an actor's life, in order to sharpen his sensibility for upcoming performances. Though the use of Emotional Memory has been debated, very few doubt the value of Strasberg's Method. As Tennessee Williams put it:

> "They [Strasberg's actors] act from the inside out. They communicate emotions they really feel. They give you a sense of life."

Exercises of Emotional Memory should be understood in the context of a play. Actors imagine themselves in a sort of group psychological therapy. There is a guide who asks questions to a given patient in order to bring to his mind the emotional state of past events. Strasberg believes his technique can be extended to any artistic manifestation and quotes Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913–1927).

Stanislavski developed a double approach to acting in his writings: from the psyche and from the body. The first one, with further developments in America and the Method school of acting, was based on an internal generation of emotions. The second, dear to Meyerhold (1874–1940) and Gordon Craig (1872–1966), prescribes that acting is very much determined by the body movements and gestures.

The acting technique of Meyerhold blends psychological and physiological processes in order to apply learned gestures and movements as a way of expressing emotion outwardly. Meisner, another influential acting professor of Hollywood, prescribes, like Meyerhold, that emotions are also a product of the alterations of the body.

Though contemporary cinema is more inclined to internal acting, we can see actors such as Jim Carrey who successfully employ outward acting in their performances. Comedy indeed is the best ground for external acting, and it's not mere coincidence that one of Meyerhold's aims was that of bringing the techniques of the Commedia dell'arte to modern representation.

Craig's thoughts on acting may have influenced Strasberg's austerity. Like Kuleshov, Craig believes actors are accessory to the action and the text of a play. Craig advocates the use of expressionless actors, akin to the puppets or the statues of ancient Egypt. And indeed, to watch the pauses of acting in cinema is an experience quite similar to that of contemplating a portrait in photography. Actors become passive figures fulfilled in feelings and intentions by the imagination of their viewers, very much under the influence of editing and music.

In an interview at the Actors Studio Johnny Depp expressed his lack of interest in his films. For Depp, acting is an art reduced to the factual mise-en-scène. What directors do with his image in the virtual mise-en-scène appeared not to be his main concern.

Indeed, most actors affirm that acting for theatre is more rewarding than performing in a film. After a play has premiered, the stage player performs his character in chronological real-time. The film star, by contrast, is obliged to cut his/her inspiration according to the will of a director.

9. Direction

There is a freshness to *The Girlfriends* (*Le Amiche*, 1955) that will always surprise new generations of moviegoers. This early feature by Michelangelo Antonioni introduces many of the key elements and themes explored in the director’s later, more prestigious works. It presents a complex narrative style and a keen eye for the intricacies of human relationships, both of which became hallmarks of Antonioni's filmography.

In *Le Amiche*, we see the groundwork laid for the existential themes that Antonioni would delve into more deeply in his later films. The search for Anna in *L’avventura* (1960), for example, is a cinematic device used to explore the existential ennui of her admirers, all of whom are unaware of the true nature of this character. Anna's disappearance becomes a metaphor for the characters' own internal voids and their struggles with identity and purpose. This theme of existential uncertainty and the search for meaning is hinted at in *Le Amiche* through the characters' interactions and personal dilemmas.

Le Amiche offers a subtler yet equally profound exploration of love and human connection. The traps of the maze of love are tenderly exteriorized in the scenes where Clelia and Tony walk around the furniture shops of Torino. This setting, with its elegant yet confining displays, serves as a visual metaphor for the constraints and expectations placed on personal relationships. The characters navigate these spaces much like they navigate their own emotional landscapes, seeking genuine connections amidst cultural pressures.

As in Stendhal’s novels, class and economics significantly condition love in *Le Amiche*. The characters' social standings and financial concerns are ever-present, influencing their choices and interactions. This social unmasking is woven into the film, highlighting the ways in which external factors such as money and origin shape internal experiences. Antonioni's acute observation of these dynamics lends the film a timeless relevance, as these issues remain pertinent across generations.

Antonioni’s mastery in *Le Amiche* is embodied by the harrowing performances of Madeleine Fischer (Rosetta) and Valentina Cortese (Nene.) Brought up on the philosophy of the Enlightenment, Rosetta is a woman tortured by false conceptions of happiness, a figure who is very much unable to cope with solitude and disdain. In contrast, Nene is a practical girl who accepts that other women are more beautiful than her, with patience and suffering being her main only charms.

There is also a poignant note on friendship contained in the brief snippets of dialogue sustained by the pair: for example, one of them declares “I’ll help you by leaving him. I’ll be strong.” But Antonioni’s genius is more evident in his elaborated and yet casual mise en scène. This is demonstrated in the sequence where Clelia recriminations the vanity of the richest woman in the group while various characters enter and leave the frame.

The smoothness of Antonioni’s camera works imperceptibly. He plays with the spectator’s gaze until he is able to carve the right memorable image, such as when Clelia and Tony walk away from one another, leaving us in an open space with several blocks of derelict houses as depth-of-field.

Antonioni was a passionate reader of Césare Pavese, the writer of "Tra donne sole" a short novel from which the director and his cowriters adapted their screenplay. Pointedly, Pavese, a poet who committed suicide, concluded his last diary entry with: “No more words, only a gesture”. In *Le Amiche* we sit before a film that is not merely a rhapsody of words, but an overall aesthetic gesture written in the form of a three-act suicide note.

The opening shot of Torino introduces us to the life of a group of characters where love has no place. Clelia bluntly declares the film’s core premise in the seemingly idyllic scene on the train:

“Very few people can really be self-sufficient. We can’t do without others. It’s no use thinking you can.”

But such words only apply to the weak, as Lorenzo tragically points out in his excluding, yet very cruel:

“I don’t need anyone”.

The dialogue is concise and spontaneous throughout *Le Amiche*. There are also lines that define characters in terms of an unbearable lightness; when Nene asks Mariella (Anna Maria Pancani)

“And what talents do you have?” she answers,

“Me? Ask the guys.”

There are other lines in the film that seem to contain an entire relationship:

“I fell in love with you while you painted my portrait…. You painted my face and it felt like you were caressing me.”

Lorenzo, indeed, has fallen in love with Rosetta’s image, whereas she is instead focused on the finest fibre of his nature, that region reserved for anger and inspiration.

The title of the novel by Colombian journalist Eduardo Zalamea Borda, "Cuatro años a bordo de mí mismo[48]" (1934), succinctly captures the essence of alienation and isolation felt by the characters in Michelangelo Antonioni's films. In Antonioni's movies, such as *L’avventura* (1960) and *L’eclisse* (1962), characters often seem trapped within their own inner worlds, unable to genuinely connect with others.

Antonioni approaches love with a scepticism that manifests in four recurring stages in his films:

1. **Flirting:** Characters initiate relationships with superficial interest and a search for novelty.
2. **Making Love:** The physical consummation of the relationship often lacks emotional depth: "Eros is sick." The essence of individual identity is the true affliction that plagues Antonioni's characters. This affliction manifests as an inability to transcend the self and connect meaningfully with others. Antonioni's characters are "aboard themselves," navigating their solitary existences, unable to break free from self-imposed isolation.
3. **Doubt:** Characters begin to question the authenticity of their feelings and the validity of the relationship.
4. **Jealousy:** Insecurity and distrust erode the relationship, leading to total disconnection.

48 Zalamea Borda, Eduardo (1982). 4 años a bordo de mí mismo. Bedout.

In *L’avventura*, Anna's disappearance becomes a symbol of the futile search for meaning in human relationships. The characters seek something they cannot define, reflecting their inner emptiness. Similarly, in *L’eclisse*, characters navigate a world of superficiality and emotional disconnection.

Le Amiche’s Lorenzo (Gabriele Ferzetti) is a mediocre artist who finds a lover to support him; Mariella, a shallow girl who seeks many men, longing for the attention of both those who are immediately present and those just beyond her reach, stating, for example:

“Tell me if there is a woman prettier than me in the next room?”.

But the most intriguing character in this exceptional film is Momina (Yvonne Furneaux,) a beautiful woman separated from her rich husband. A pre-incarnation of the most cynical of characters in Federico Fellini's *La dolce vita (1960,)* she is cleverly summed up by Clelia towards the end of the film:

“You play with the emotions of the others as if they were of your kind. You, who don’t even know the nature of emotions.”

Tips for Directors from Michelangelo Antonioni's films:

1. **Complex Narrative Style**: Embrace intricate storytelling. *Le Amiche* (1955) showcases a sophisticated narrative that interweaves multiple character arcs, highlighting the complexity of human relationships. Similarly, in *Red Desert* (1964), the plot is less about a linear story and more about the psychological and emotional states of the characters, which keeps audiences engaged and encourages them to explore deeper themes.
2. **Existential Themes**: Incorporate existential questions into your characters' journeys. In *Le Amiche* (1955), the characters' interactions hint at larger existential dilemmas, a technique Antonioni would refine in later works like *L’avventura* (1960), where Anna's disappearance becomes a metaphor for the characters' own internal voids and their struggles with identity and purpose. This adds depth and resonance to the narrative.
3. **Visual Metaphors**: Use settings and visual elements to symbolize internal states and societal pressures. The furniture shops in *Le Amiche* (1955) reflect the constraints and expectations of love, mirroring the characters' emotional struggles. In *The Eclipse* (1962), the scenes of deserted streets and half-built buildings reflect the alienation and disconnection felt by the characters.
4. **Class and Economics**: Highlight the impact of social class and economic status on relationships. As in Stendhal’s novels, Antonioni shows how these factors condition love and influence personal choices, adding realism and social commentary to the story. In *Il Grido* (1957), the protagonist's economic struggles are central to his sense of despair and alienation.
5. **Character Depth through Performances**: Direct actors to embody complex emotions and philosophical conflicts. The performances of Madeleine Fischer and

Valentina Cortese in *Le Amiche* (1955) bring their characters' inner turmoil to life, emphasizing the contrast between different personal philosophies and coping mechanisms. Monica Vitti's portrayal in *L'avventura* (1960) similarly captures the profound existential despair and emotional complexity of her character.

6. **Dialogue as Character Development**: Use concise, spontaneous dialogue to reveal character traits and dynamics. In *Le Amiche* (1955), lines encapsulate entire relationships or highlight personal insecurities, making characters more relatable and memorable. In *Blow-Up* (1966), the sparse dialogue enhances the mysterious and ambiguous atmosphere, allowing visual elements to drive character development.

7. **Fluid Mise en Scène**: Create dynamic scenes where characters move in and out of the frame, enhancing the realism and fluidity of interactions. Antonioni's mise en scène in *Le Amiche* (1955) captures the organic flow of life, making the film feel more authentic and immersive. The choreography of movement in *La Notte* (1961) similarly adds to the film's naturalistic yet stylistically controlled aesthetic.

8. **Smooth Camera Work**: Employ subtle, imperceptible camera movements to guide the audience's gaze and carve memorable images. This technique helps build a connection between the viewer and the narrative, making key moments more impactful. The long, drifting shots in *The Passenger* (1975) create a sense of continuous, unfolding reality.

9. **Literary Adaptation**: Draw inspiration from literary works to enrich your screenplay. Antonioni's adaptation of Césare Pavese's *Tra donne sole* brings a poetic and philosophical depth to *Le Amiche* (1955), demonstrating the value of literary influences in filmmaking. *Blow-Up* (1966) was inspired by a short story by Julio Cortázar, blending literary and visual storytelling.

10. **Existential Dialogue**: Integrate philosophical reflections into the dialogue to deepen the thematic content. Clelia's declaration about self-sufficiency and Lorenzo's statement about independence encapsulate the film's existential undertones in *Le Amiche* (1955). In *L'Eclisse* (1962), the characters' conversations often touch on themes of meaning and existence amidst modern life's chaos.

11. **Character Juxtaposition**: Contrast characters' personalities and philosophies to highlight different aspects of the human experience. The differences between Rosetta and Nene, or Momina and Clelia in *Le Amiche* (1955), create a richer narrative landscape and invite viewers to reflect on varied human conditions. In *La Notte* (1961), the juxtaposition between Giovanni and Lidia's responses to their crumbling marriage explores different facets of love and disillusionment.

12. **Visual Storytelling**: Rely on visual elements and gestures to convey the story's essence. Antonioni's films are not just dialogues but aesthetic gestures, with scenes that communicate through composition, movement, and visual symbolism. In *Red Desert* (1964), the industrial landscapes and muted colours visually express the protagonist's inner turmoil and sense of alienation.

13. **Scepticism about Love**: Portray love as a multifaceted experience with stages of flirting, lovemaking, doubt, and jealousy. This nuanced depiction of romantic relationships resonates with audiences, reflecting the complexities of real-life emotions. In *L'avventura* (1960), the shifting dynamics between Sandro and Claudia capture the

transient and often unfulfilled nature of love.

14. **Character-Driven Plot**: Focus on characters' internal struggles and motivations rather than external plot devices. In *Le Amiche* (1955), characters are driven by their existential crises and personal dilemmas, making the narrative more introspective and compelling. *La Notte* (1961) similarly centres on the internal conflicts of its protagonists, exploring their emotional and intellectual struggles.

15. **Subtlety in Emotion**: Capture subtle emotional nuances rather than overt displays of sentiment. This approach, evident in Antonioni's films, encourages viewers to engage more deeply with the characters' psychological landscapes. In *The Passenger* (1975), Jack Nicholson's restrained performance and the film's subdued emotional tone invite viewers to delve into the character's inner life.

The Maternal/Paternal Figure of the Film Director

Directors must understand the psychology of the actor, serving as both father figures and tutors to those willing to expose their feelings to the crowd. This dual role encompasses guidance, discipline, nurturing, and emotional support, crucial for actors to deliver their best performances.

Erich Fromm's distinction between maternal and paternal love sheds light on this dynamic. He describes maternal love as unconditional, representing the natural world and a sense of belonging, whereas paternal love is conditional, representing the world of discipline, thought, and societal structures. This analogy is particularly relevant to the relationship between directors and actors:

> "The relationship to the father is quite different. The mother is the home we come from; she is nature, soil, the ocean. The father does not represent any such natural home.
>
> He has little connection with the child in the first years of its life, and his importance for the child in this early period cannot be compared with that of the mother. But while the father does not represent the natural world, he represents the other pole of human existence: the world of thought, of man-made things, of law and order, of discipline, of travel, and adventure. The father is the one who teaches the child, who shows him the road into the world... Closely related to this function is one which is connected with socio-economic development. When private property came into existence, and when private property could be inherited by one of the sons, the father began to look for that son to whom he could leave his property. Naturally, that was the one whom the father thought best fitted to become his successor, the son who was most like him, and consequently whom he liked the most. Fatherly love is conditional love. Its principle is
>
> "I love you because you fulfil my expectations, because you do your duty, because you are like me." In conditional fatherly love we find, as with unconditional motherly love, a negative and a positive aspect. The negative aspect is the very fact that fatherly love has to be deserved, that it can be lost if one does not do what is expected. In the nature of fatherly love lies the fact that obedience becomes the main virtue, that disobedience is the main sin — and its punishment the withdrawal of

fatherly love. The positive side is equally important. Since his love is conditioned, I can do something to acquire it, I can work for it; his love is not outside of my control as motherly love is[49]."

A film director's role can be compared to that of a father, guiding actors through the creative process. Directors provide structure, discipline, and a vision that actors must align with. This paternalistic guidance helps actors navigate their roles and the emotional landscapes of their characters. Like a father who prepares his child for the world, a director prepares actors to present their characters convincingly to the audience.

Fatherly love, as Fromm explains, is conditional and based on the fulfilment of expectations. Similarly, directors expect actors to meet certain standards and perform their roles according to the director's vision. This conditional love motivates actors to strive for excellence, knowing that their success is tied to the approval and guidance of the director. The potential for earning this conditional approval can drive actors to hone their craft and push their boundaries.

The director's paternalistic gifts give them an aura of leadership. They are seen as figures of authority who can mentor and shape actors' performances. This leadership is not just about giving orders but also about inspiring confidence and trust in the actors. A director, much like a father, must balance authority with empathy, understanding the individual needs and strengths of each actor.

Orson Welles, months before his death, reflected on the multifaceted nature of directors. He described them as individuals capable of performing many tasks in life, possessing exceptional qualities that enable them to create dreams or nightmares in the realm of imagination. This portrayal highlights the director's role as a creative visionary and a societal rebel. Directors often push the boundaries of creativity and challenge societal norms, much like a father who encourages his children to question and explore the world.

Directors must strike a balance between discipline and creativity. They provide the structure and rules within which actors can explore their roles while also encouraging innovative interpretations and emotional depth. This balance is akin to the fatherly role of teaching children the rules of society while also allowing them the freedom to develop their individuality.

While directors may embody the conditional love associated with paternal figures, they also nurture talent and creativity. They recognize the potential in their actors and provide the support and opportunities needed for them to flourish. This nurturing aspect is crucial for actors to feel confident in their abilities and take creative risks.

The perils of Transferring in Film Direction

The concept of transference is well-documented, particularly in the relationships between patients and their therapists. Sigmund Freud[50] first introduced the concept of

49 Fromm, E. (1956). The Art of Loving. Harper & Row Publishers., p. 43.
50 Freud, S. (1912). The Dynamics of Transference. In Collected Papers, Volume II. Hogarth Press.

transference, describing it as the process by which patients project feelings, desires, and expectations from significant figures in their early life, often parents, onto their therapist. This unconscious redirection can bring to the surface repressed emotions and unresolved conflicts, allowing them to be examined and worked through in therapy. Freud saw transference as both a potential obstacle and a critical tool in psychoanalytic treatment, helping to reveal the underlying issues affecting the patient.

Carl Jung[51],, a contemporary of Freud, expanded on the idea of transference, emphasizing its broader implications beyond the therapeutic setting. Jung believed that transference could occur in various interpersonal relationships, not just between therapist and patient. This included any situation where one individual assumes an authoritative, guiding, or nurturing role over another, which can trigger the transfer of feelings and attitudes from past significant relationships.

This phenomenon can also occur in the dynamic between a film director and an actor, where the intense, dependent relationship can create a psychological crush. Directors, much like therapists, occupy a position of authority and influence. They guide, critique, and support actors in their craft, which can create a fertile ground for transference. Actors may unconsciously redirect feelings of admiration, dependency, or even unresolved parental issues onto the director. This can enhance the actor's emotional depth and authenticity in their performance, as they tap into these powerful, often latent emotions.

For instance, Donald Winnicott[52], another influential psychoanalyst, spoke about the importance of the "holding environment" in therapy, where the therapist provides a safe, supportive space for the patient to explore their inner world. Similarly, a director can create a secure, nurturing environment on set, encouraging actors to take emotional risks and delve deeper into their characters. This environment can foster a strong emotional bond, amplifying the potential for transference.

A notable example of this dynamic can be seen in the scandal involving French director Henri-Georges Clouzot and actress Brigitte Bardot during the filming of *La Vérité* (The Truth) in 1960. Clouzot prided himself on his ability to transform anyone into a film star. However, his intense techniques often blurred the lines between reality and performance for his actors.

During the production of *La Vérité*, which explored themes of manipulation and obsession, rumours swirled that Clouzot's controlling behaviour on set mirrored the film's dark narrative. Bardot, a rising star known for her fiery personality, reportedly clashed with Clouzot's methods. The intensity of the production allegedly took a toll on her mental health, leading to speculation that she became dangerously entangled with her character. The situation became a scandal, with reports surfacing that Bardot attempted suicide shortly after filming wrapped. The exact details remain shrouded in rumour, but the incident highlights the potential psychological impact of intense

51 Jung, C. G. (1954). The Practice of Psychotherapy: Essays on the Psychology of the Transference and Other Subjects. Princeton University Press.
52 Winnicott, D. W. (1965). The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development. International Universities Press.

director-actor dynamics and the resulting transference.

However, as with therapeutic transference, this dynamic in the director-actor relationship must be managed carefully. The intense emotional connection can be beneficial, providing rich, genuine performances, but it also carries risks if boundaries are not maintained. The director must balance their role as a mentor and authority figure with sensitivity to the actor's emotional well-being, ensuring that the professional relationship remains healthy and productive.

Understanding the psychological dynamics of transference and dependence is crucial for directors. By managing these relationships with empathy and clear boundaries, directors can harness the emotional intensity and vulnerability of their actors to create powerful, authentic performances, while ensuring a healthy, productive working environment.

Edgar Alan Poe, the Ideal Film Director

A film director is not merely a figure who calls "action" and "cut." They are visionary leaders steering the entire production. This involves making critical decisions, inspiring the crew and cast, and navigating the myriad challenges that arise. The director must ensure that every element of the film aligns with their artistic vision while managing practical constraints such as budget and schedule.

In Edgar Allan Poe's *The Purloined Letter*, Auguste Dupin showcases his blend of analytical and imaginative skills, ultimately outsmarting a mathematician. The story revolves around the theft of a sensitive letter, hidden in plain sight by the cunning Minister D. The Parisian police, despite their exhaustive search, fail to find the letter due to their overly complex approach.

Dupin, however, understands that the simplest hiding place is often the most effective. He reasons that the Minister, anticipating the police's rigorous search methods, would choose a deceptively obvious location. Dupin's insight into human nature and his ability to think like both a mathematician and a poet lead him to the hidden letter, casually placed in a card rack, disguised as an ordinary piece of paper.

This anecdote illustrates Dupin's ability to balance methodical analysis with creative intuition, to make use of deductive and inductive judgments as well as abductive inferences, a skill set essential for film directors. Like Dupin outsmarting the methodical police, a director must think beyond technical proficiency, employing creativity to solve problems and achieve artistic goals.

Like Dupin, a director should be both a mathematician and a poet. The technical aspect of directing involves understanding camera work, lighting, sound design, and editing. This technical expertise is akin to Dupin's and Dupin's nemesis' mathematical precision, where every detail matters.

Beyond technical proficiency, a director must also possess a poetic sensibility. This involves evoking emotions, creating atmosphere, and telling a story that captures audiences on an emotional level. A director's creative vision transforms a series of moving images into a compelling narrative.

The allure of technique over substance has led some directors to downfall, akin to the defeated mathematician in *The Purloined Letter*. Filmmakers captivated by technical

prowess sometimes lose sight of storytelling and artistic depth, leading to failure. Examples include *Heaven's Gate* (1980) by Michael Cimino, a significant box office disaster, and the 1963 film *Cleopatra* by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, known for its lavish production but lacklustre narrative.

Contrasting with these failures are the Auguste-Dupin directors (Cecil B. de Mille, John Houston, John Ford, Luis Buñuel, Orson Welles, Fassbinder, Steven Spielberg, Tim Burton and so on), who balance analytical thinking and artistic sensibility, embodying a multidimensional approach to problem-solving and storytelling. Dupin's intellectual depth and creative insight set him apart as a character who navigates both logic and poetic intuition in his pursuit of truth.

If Edgar Allan Poe, with his intricate narrative style and profound understanding of human psychology, had ventured into filmmaking, he could have crafted captivating films. Like Welles, Poe might have delved into complex psychological dramas, supernatural thrillers, or dark mysteries exploring human nature. His cinematic creations could have been haunting, thought-provoking, and visually stunning.

In addition to being a mathematician and a poet, a film director must also be an expert administrator and coordinator. Managing a large team requires excellent organizational skills, effective delegation, and maintaining harmony under strain. Directors must cope with unforeseen challenges such as weather disruptions, technical failures, and interpersonal conflicts. They must remain calm and composed, finding solutions to keep the production on track.

Orson Welles vs. Terry Gilliam

Two emblematic figures in cinema, Orson Welles and Terry Gilliam, faced significant obstacles during the production of their films. An analysis of their experiences highlights different approaches to solving on-set problems and reveals how their artistic visions and specific circumstances influenced their decisions.

Orson Welles, known for his innovation and perseverance, faced severe budget constraints during the filming of *Othello* in 1951. One day, he found himself in a castle in Morocco with several actors ready to shoot, but the costumes necessary for the scene had not arrived. Instead of delaying the shoot, which would have increased costs and risked losing the opportunity to film at that location, Welles made a bold decision. He chose to film a scene in a Turkish bath, using towels to dress the actors. The steam from the bath added a unique atmosphere, creating an impressive visual effect that, although improvised, perfectly integrated into the film's aesthetic. This ingenious solution not only solved a logistical problem but also became one of the film's most memorable moments.

Decades later, Terry Gilliam faced his own challenges during the production of *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*, documented in *Lost in La Mancha* (Keith Fulton and Louis Pepe, 2002). Gilliam, with a very specific vision for his film, chose French actor Jean Rochefort to play Don Quixote. However, Rochefort suffered a herniated disc that prevented him from continuing to shoot. Unlike Welles, who had demonstrated remarkable flexibility in the face of adversity, Gilliam found himself unable to proceed. The production was indefinitely halted as Gilliam did not consider recasting the main role. His rigid approach, influenced by his training and belief that a film should be made

exactly as originally imagined, led to the project's cancellation at that time.

The fundamental difference between Welles and Gilliam lies in their ability to adapt to unforeseen circumstances. Welles demonstrated an extraordinary ability to improvise and turn limitations into creative opportunities. His willingness to modify the original scene without sacrificing the artistic integrity of the film reflects a flexibility crucial in the world of cinema.

On the other hand, Gilliam, though equally visionary, showed resistance to deviating from his original plan. His insistence on keeping Rochefort as Don Quixote, despite the actor's health problems, resulted in the production's paralysis. This rigid approach underscores a common challenge for many directors: balancing fidelity to the artistic vision with the practical reality of film production.

The experiences of Orson Welles and Terry Gilliam in film direction offer valuable lessons on the importance of adaptability and creativity in problem-solving. While Welles transformed a limitation into an artistic opportunity, Gilliam faced the reality that inflexibility can lead to the failure of a project.

Talent and fame

In today's film industry, directors work alongside screenwriters, producers, cinematographers, editors, and many other talented professionals to realize their creative vision. Directors oversee various aspects of the filmmaking process, including casting, production design, cinematography, editing, and sound design. They are ultimately responsible for guiding the artistic and technical decisions that shape the final product.

However, there have been exceptional figures in film history, such as Charlie Chaplin and Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who took on multiple roles in the filmmaking process, including writing, directing, and sometimes even acting in their own films. These multi-talented auteurs demonstrated the advantages of blending all responsibilities into a single author. Their work bear a personal touch and distinctive style that set them apart from their peers.

Faith has enabled me to write, produce, direct, and act in two feature-length narrative films: *Hamlet Unbound* (2012) and *Kennedy's Crimes* (2012). Additionally, I have written and directed three feature-length documentaries: *Manati* (2005), *The Seizure* (2021), and *Love at First Sight* (2022). My experience extends to directing numerous theatre plays across several countries. Moreover, I have authored 43 books encompassing philosophical works, poetry, novels, short stories, theatre plays, and film screenplays. I regard writing as the cornerstone of all my cinematic efforts. By prioritizing creative output over social networking and lobbying, I have fully immersed myself in the art of storytelling, both in literature and film.

Many film students often ask me: "How can you live without being famous?" I respond by explaining that my work embodies life as an experience we are meant to traverse (Montaigne), where finding satisfaction in a normal existence is superior to living with the siren calls of fame, money, and power. Drawing from the wisdom of ancient philosophers, I have come to understand that no life is inherently superior to another, and from Schopenhauer, this is from ancient India, and from Plato, that everything we choose to live has been secretly agreed upon before our birth and already

approved by us. True fulfilment lies in being able to do what we are destined to do. A tree is perfect when it grows and bears fruit, regardless of whether it is admired by the crowd.

I do not forget how Henrik Ibsen, at the height of his glory, was tormented by the honours bestowed upon him by governments, and when asked what he would like to do now that he was so famous, he exclaimed: "Work! Let me work!"

The public's expectations can confine you to a singular identity. Straying from this prescribed image can lead to scrutiny and judgment. Among fellow filmmakers, I find camaraderie and shared struggles, just as I do among writers, poets, and actors. It is enough for me to be recognized within our artistic community, rather than conforming to the exaggerated personas adopted by those who seek validation through public opinion and social media metrics.

I must acknowledge that many such celebrities are mere facades, concealing emptiness beneath a veneer of self-importance. Conversations with them often reveal arrogance, as they have transformed their artistic talents into tools for flattery and manipulation, just as Marlon Brando denounced it in the interview already cited.

By taking on multiple roles, filmmakers are able to maintain a cohesive artistic vision throughout the production process and have greater control over the creative direction of their films.

Though AI will eventually reduce all actors and crew members to the screenwriter and/or director of the film, we are still living and intermediate stage, which we will compare here with the traditional methodology and practice of filmmaking, where directors encounter five crucial responsibilities.

Film Directors: Roles and Responsibilities

Film directors are often seen as the visionary leaders of a film production, responsible for bringing a story to life on the screen. Unlike in Ancient Greece and 17th-century France, where playwrights and directors were often the same person, modern filmmaking has evolved into a highly collaborative effort where directors are not required to write their own plays or scripts.

The main responsibilities of a film director are:

1. **Choosing the Screenplay**
2. **Hiring the Crew**
3. **Mise-en-scène I: Directing Actors' Movements and Performances**
4. **Supervising Art Direction**
5. **Mise-en-scène II: Directing crew members.**
6. **Supervising the Editing of the Film**

Directors often delegate up to three of these tasks to fellow directors or crew members. Eisenstein, for instance, came to conclude that the aim of film was determined by montage. Carl Dreyer of Elia Kazan would dissent; for them cinema relied on the actors' performance. George Lucas, by contrast, proved the ascendancy of the Screenplay and art direction.

1. Choosing the Screenplay

Choosing the right screenplay is the foundation of any successful film. A compelling story is essential for captivating the audience and driving the film's success. Regardless of the budget, costumes, sets, famous actors, and extensive marketing campaigns, a film with a weak screenplay is destined to fail. Directors must evaluate numerous screenplays, considering the plot, character development, dialogue, and overall narrative structure. This selection process is critical as it determines the direction and potential impact of the film.

In the industry, hundreds of screenplays are written daily, but only a handful are produced. The selection process can be influenced by lobbies, family connections, and friendships, often leading directors to direct films favoured by producers.

However, advancements in AI technology are democratizing this process. Talented writers, previously side-lined due to a lack of social connections, can now produce their films independently, ensuring that quality screenplays receive the attention they deserve.

AI-powered platforms can analyse screenplays, identifying key elements like character arcs, plot structure, and pacing. This data can be used to create a more objective and comprehensive evaluation, allowing for a more equitable selection process. Furthermore, AI-powered tools can help streamline the production process, automating tasks like scheduling, budgeting, and casting, ultimately making filmmaking more accessible to a wider range of creators.

With AI technology levelling the playing field, the film industry is poised for a renaissance, where innovative and compelling stories are given the chance to reach audiences regardless of the writer's social standing.

The Problem with Modern Streaming Content

Despite these advancements, many viewers have noted the prevalence of subpar films on platforms like Netflix and HBO. The root cause often lies in weak screenplays. Several factors contribute to this issue:

1. **Quantity Over Quality**: The pressure to constantly produce new content leads to rushed productions and less rigorous vetting of screenplays.
2. **Influence of Market Trends**: Streaming services often prioritize projects based on current trends rather than the intrinsic quality of the screenplay.
3. **Production Constraints**: Tight budgets and schedules can force compromises in the screenplay and overall production quality.
4. **Algorithmic Decisions**: Reliance on algorithms to predict viewer preferences can sometimes result in formulaic and uninspired content.

While AI has the potential to enhance the screenplay selection process, it must be implemented thoughtfully to avoid these pitfalls. By focusing on the core elements of storytelling and prioritizing originality and content, the industry can leverage AI to

produce higher-quality films that resonate with audiences.

2. Hiring the Crew

Traditional Methods of Hiring the Crew

In the traditional filmmaking process, hiring a crew involves several critical steps. Directors, often working with producers and casting directors, go through a detailed and time-consuming process to assemble a team of skilled professionals. Here are the key steps involved:

1. **Networking and Recommendations**: Directors often rely on industry connections and recommendations from trusted colleagues to find crew members. This network-based approach helps ensure that candidates have a proven track record and come with references.
2. **Interviews and Portfolios**: Potential crew members are interviewed to assess their suitability for the project. Directors review portfolios and past work to gauge the candidate's expertise and creativity. This step is crucial for roles such as cinematographer, production designer, and sound designer.
3. **Technical Skills Assessment**: For technical roles, directors may conduct practical tests or review technical work to ensure candidates have the necessary skills. This can include evaluating cinematographers' reels or sound designers' audio samples.
4. **Creative Compatibility**: Directors look for crew members who share their artistic vision and can contribute creatively to the project. This involves discussions about the screenplay, visual style, and overall tone of the film.
5. **Collaboration and Teamwork**: It's essential to assess how well potential crew members work in a team environment. Directors often look for individuals who can collaborate effectively and adapt to the dynamic nature of film production.
6. **Contract Negotiation**: Once the right candidates are identified, directors and producers negotiate contracts, ensuring that terms are mutually agreeable and align with the project's budget and timeline.

AI-Driven Approaches to Hiring the Crew

AI can streamline and enhance the selection process, making it more efficient and data-driven. Here's how AI can revolutionize crew hiring:

1. **Database Search and Matching**: AI can search vast databases of film professionals to find candidates that match the director's specific criteria. These databases can include information on past projects, skills, availability, and reviews from previous employers.
2. **Automated Portfolio Analysis**: AI algorithms can analyse portfolios, demo reels, and past work with remarkable precision. By assessing technical proficiency, artistic style, and creative achievements, AI can shortlist candidates who meet the project's requirements.
3. **Skill and Compatibility Matching**: AI can evaluate candidates' technical skills and creative compatibility based on data from previous projects. This

includes analysing the success of past collaborations and matching candidates with similar artistic visions.

4. **Predictive Performance Analysis**: AI can predict a candidate's performance and compatibility with the director's vision by analysing historical data and trends. This involves assessing factors such as work ethic, reliability, and the ability to meet deadlines.

5. **Virtual Interviews and AI Assistants**: AI can facilitate virtual interviews and provide real-time assistance to directors by suggesting questions based on candidates' profiles. AI assistants can also evaluate responses and provide insights into candidates' suitability.

6. **Enhanced Collaboration Tools**: AI-driven collaboration tools can simulate team dynamics and predict how well candidates will work together. These tools can assess communication styles, problem-solving abilities, and potential areas of conflict.

Criteria for AI Commands in Crew Hiring

To effectively utilize AI in hiring a film crew, directors must provide clear and detailed commands to the AI systems. Here are the key criteria and commands directors might use:

1. **Specific Skill Requirements**: Directors should specify the exact skills needed for each role. For example, "Find a cinematographer with experience in low-light shooting and a strong portfolio in noir films."

2. **Creative Vision Alignment**: Directors must describe their artistic vision and desired style. Commands like "Match with a production designer who excels in creating futuristic urban environments" help AI narrow down suitable candidates.

3. **Experience Level**: Directors can set parameters for the desired experience level, such as "Select crew members with at least five years of experience in feature films."

4. **Availability and Location**: Practical considerations such as availability and location are crucial. Commands like "Find a sound designer available from July to December and based in Los Angeles" ensure logistical compatibility.

5. **Team Dynamics**: Directors can request candidates who have a history of successful teamwork, for example, "Prioritize candidates who have worked in collaborative environments and received positive peer reviews."

6. **Budget Constraints**: AI can take budget constraints into account, finding candidates who fit within the financial parameters of the project. Commands like "Identify a costume designer within a budget of $50,000" ensure financial feasibility.

7. **Diversity and Inclusion**: Directors may prioritize diversity and inclusion, issuing commands such as "Ensure a diverse pool of candidates for the production team."

8. **Past Project Success**: Commands like "Select crew members who have worked on films with critical acclaim or commercial success" can help ensure high-quality hires.

By leveraging AI, directors can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the crew

hiring process, ensuring they assemble a talented and cohesive team that aligns with their creative vision and practical needs. This approach not only saves time but also broadens the pool of potential candidates, enabling directors to discover and collaborate with skilled professionals they might not have otherwise encountered.

3. Mise-en-scène: Directing Actors' Movements and Performances

Mise-en-scène, which refers to the arrangement of everything that appears in the framing – actors, lighting, décor, props, costume – is a crucial aspect of directing. Directors must guide actors to deliver performances that align with the film's vision. This involves instructing actors on their movements, gestures, and emotional expressions to ensure authenticity and consistency in their roles. Directors like Carl Dreyer and Elia Kazan emphasize that cinema relies heavily on actors' performances, highlighting the importance of this task.

The mise-en-scène is divided into two simultaneous moments:

1. The factual mise-en-scène. Where actors move and act in a real space according to the directions of the director.

2. The virtual mise-en-scène. Where cameramen capture excerpts of the factual mise-en-scène in a two-dimensional square space. The factual mise-en-scène relies on the intellectual and emotional rapport between actors and film directors. Ideas and feelings are put into action before a lens.

3.1. The Factual Mise-en-Scène: Steps and Processes

The factual mise-en-scène is a crucial component of filmmaking where actors perform in real space according to the director's guidance. This process is essential for bringing the screenplay to life before the lens captures it. The following steps outline the preparation and execution of the factual mise-en-scène:

3.1.1. Casting

Casting is the foundation of a successful film. As playwright George Bernard Shaw suggested, casting should go beyond physical appearances to include the tonality and range of actors' voices. For example, in *Othello*, casting a baritone, a tenor, and a bass as the main characters can add depth to the interpretation. The right actors bring the director's vision to life and add layers to the characters they portray.

As Shaw highlighted, the voice is a critical element in casting. The tonal quality and range of an actor's voice can significantly influence the character's presence and impact. For instance, in *Othello*, the distinct vocal ranges of a baritone, tenor, and bass can create a rich auditory tapestry, enhancing the audience's emotional experience.

Beyond physical and vocal qualities, casting should consider an actor's ability to convey the character's emotional and psychological depth. The right actor can bring subtlety and nuance to the role, making the character more relatable and complex.

Casting involves finding actors who match the director's ideal image of the character. This image includes not just physical attributes but also personality traits, voice

qualities, and emotional range. However, this ideal image should be flexible, not fixed. Directors should remain open to how different actors might bring unexpected qualities to a role. An actor might not fit the initial physical description but could capture the essence of the character in other powerful ways. Flexibility allows directors to explore diverse interpretations and find the most compelling embodiment of the character.

The casting of Sigourney Weaver as Ripley in *Alien* (Scott, 1979) serves as a prime example of how the ideal image of a character can evolve and the importance of being flexible during the casting process.

The script for *Alien*, written by Dan O'Bannon, originally did not specify Ripley's gender. This opened the door for a broader casting search and allowed the character to be shaped by the chosen actor's performance rather than preconceived notions about gender. Sigourney Weaver, relatively unknown at the time, auditioned for the role of Ripley. Her performance and presence during the audition process were pivotal in securing the role.

Weaver brought a commanding presence and intensity to the audition, qualities that were crucial for the character of Ripley. Her ability to convey strength, intelligence, and vulnerability impressed the filmmakers. Weaver's screen test further solidified her suitability for the role. Her on-screen chemistry and ability to convey a complex range of emotions convinced the directors and producers that she was the right choice.

Director Ridley Scott and the producers, including David Giler and Walter Hill, were instrumental in the decision to cast Weaver. Casting Weaver broke away from traditional gender roles in sci-fi and action films, paving the way for stronger, more complex female characters in cinema. Her portrayal of Ripley became iconic, demonstrating that a female lead could carry a major action film successfully.

The character of Ripley evolved during the casting process, influenced by Weaver's interpretation and the collaborative vision of the filmmakers. This flexibility in the character's development allowed Ripley to become a multifaceted and enduring figure in film history. The casting of Sigourney Weaver as Ripley had a profound impact on the film and its legacy.

Weaver's portrayal of Ripley was so successful that it led to her reprising the role in multiple sequels, each time adding depth and nuance to the character. Ripley became a cultural icon, representing a shift in how female characters were portrayed in action and science fiction genres. Weaver's performance was widely acclaimed and remains a benchmark for strong female protagonists.

The Casting Process

The casting process typically involves several stages:

Auditions: Actors perform selected scenes from the script to showcase their interpretation of the character. Directors look for actors who not only fit the character's description but also bring a unique perspective to the role.

Call-backs: Shortlisted actors are invited for additional auditions. This stage often involves more in-depth performances, including interactions with other potential cast members to assess chemistry and dynamics.

Screen Tests: For film, screen tests are conducted to see how actors appear on camera and how well they fit into the visual style of the production. This helps directors visualize the final product more accurately.

3.1.2. Reading and Analysis

This stage involves a thorough reading and analysis of the script with the actors. Directors and actors dissect each word and sentence to understand their fundamental meanings and discuss the interpretation of the text. This process helps establish the film's mood and tone. There is a critical distinction between reading, which is a passive activity, and interpreting, which is active and more suitable for artists.

Reading involves understanding the literal meaning of the text, recognizing the narrative structure, and becoming familiar with the dialogue and stage directions. It's about absorbing the material.

Interpreting, on the other hand, goes deeper, involving an active engagement with the text. Actors and directors explore subtext, emotional undertones, and character motivations. Interpretation is about bringing the text to life, making artistic choices that reflect the director's vision and the characters' complexities.

For example, in Michael Radford's *The Merchant of Venice* (2004), featuring Al Pacino, the portrayal of Shylock is more sympathetic and humanized than in previous cinematic versions. The director must ensure that actors understand the sociological and emotional context of their characters to deliver such nuanced performances. This involves discussions about historical context, character backstories, and thematic elements.

3.1.3. Games

Games play a significant role in fostering creativity and camaraderie among actors. Based on Huizinga's "Homo Ludens[53]," games help actors loosen up and become more receptive to creative expression. These playful activities can build trust and rapport among the cast, making it easier to achieve authentic and dynamic performances.

Playing vs. Acting: In English, the term "playing" often refers to both games and acting, highlighting the element of performance and make-believe in both activities. In French, the word "jouer" serves the same dual purpose, emphasizing the playful nature of acting. This linguistic analogy underscores the connection between games and performance.

Types of Games: Improvisational games, trust-building exercises, and role-playing activities are commonly used to help actors develop spontaneity and flexibility. These games encourage actors to take risks and experiment with their characters in a safe and supportive environment.

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53 Huizinga, J. (1938). Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

3.1.4. Improvisations

Improvisations allow actors to explore and experiment with their characters beyond the written script. Directors encourage actors to spontaneously vary their performances, which can lead to discovering new dimensions of their characters and more vivid portrayals. Improvisations add layers of spontaneity and realism to the film.

In his influential book "Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre[54]", Keith Johnstone discusses theories that distinguish submissive from dominant attitudes in acting. He argues that these attitudes can shape how characters interact and influence each other. By exploring these dynamics through improvisation, actors can uncover deeper psychological layers of their characters.

Submissive vs. Dominant Attitudes: In improvisation exercises, actors might experiment with varying levels of assertiveness or passivity, seeing how these changes affect their character's behaviour and relationships. This can lead to more nuanced and compelling performances.

Improvisation helps actors stay in the moment, react authentically to their scene partners, and adapt to unexpected developments. It fosters creativity and encourages actors to think beyond the script, contributing to a more dynamic and engaging performance.

By incorporating these techniques into the rehearsal process, directors can help actors develop a deeper understanding of their characters and the story, leading to richer and more compelling performances on screen.

3.1.5. Text Interpretation

After establishing movement directions, directors focus on text interpretation. This involves ensuring that actors' performances align with the concepts and emotions uncovered during the initial text analysis. The goal is to achieve a coherent and impactful delivery of lines that resonate with the film's overall vision.

Text interpretation goes beyond mere memorization of lines; it requires a deep understanding of the subtext, the underlying emotions, and the motivations driving each character's speech. Ideally, a director should learn acting from the inside, as an actor, in order to understand the craft of their immediate collaborators. As a Professor of film direction in Portugal and India, such was my method, yielding impressive results.

Directors who understand the intricacies of acting can work closely with actors to dissect each line, ensuring that the delivery is not only clear but also charged with contrasting emotions. It is not merely about choosing what emotion an actor should feel in a given passage—for actors change such interpretation at will—but about displaying as many emotions as possible in the shortest possible time.

Acting is thus evident not only in projecting emotions, which most amateur actors can do, but in transitioning from one emotion to another with justification. Such justification occurs in the pauses of the film, moments when we can observe the nuances of changing thoughts and emotions on the faces and through the physical actions of the

54 Johnstone, K. (1979). Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre. Methuen Drama.

actors. That's why it is said that true acting is found in the pauses.

This process may involve breaking down the script into beats, exploring different ways of delivering a line, and kindling the actor's imagination by discussing the character's backstory and intentions. "A beat" refers to a small unit of action or a brief moment that signifies a shift or change in the narrative or emotional state of the characters.

Effective text interpretation ensures that the audience can follow the narrative effortlessly and feel the emotional nuances of each scene. Directors might use techniques such as table readings, rehearsals, and one-on-one sessions with actors to refine their performances. By the time filming begins, the actors should have a solid grasp of their lines and the emotional context, allowing them to deliver performances that are both natural and impactful.

3.1.6. Rhythm Variations

Rhythm variations are crucial for maintaining dynamic and engaging performances. Each actor should exhibit unique internal and external rhythms based on their character's personality and emotional state. Directors must ensure that these rhythms are diverse and interact well with each other. A film with monotonous rhythms can become dull, whereas varied rhythms can enhance the storytelling.

For instance, a character who is anxious might speak and move quickly, while a more composed character might exhibit slower, more deliberate rhythms. These differences can create a dynamic interplay between characters, highlighting contrasts and driving the narrative forward. Directors might use exercises and rehearsals to help actors find their character's rhythm, experimenting with pacing, pauses, and physical movements.

Incorporating rhythm variations can also aid in maintaining audience interest. Changes in rhythm can signal shifts in tone, mood, or plot developments, keeping the audience engaged. Directors should pay attention to the overall rhythm of the film, ensuring that it fluctuates appropriately to reflect the story's highs and lows. This technique can be seen in films like *Whiplash* (2014), where the varying rhythms of the characters and the music create an intense and compelling narrative.

Gosford Park, directed by Robert Altman, is a film that intertwines various storylines and characters within a single setting. While this complexity has the potential to create a rich and engaging narrative, the film suffers from a lack of rhythmic variation that results in a monotonous pacing. The dialogue delivery, scene transitions, and overall tempo often lack the necessary fluctuations to keep the audience fully engaged.

Many scenes in *Gosford Park* transition without significant changes in tempo or mood. The seamless but unvaried flow can make the audience feel like the narrative is dragging, as there are no distinct peaks or troughs to maintain interest.

The film's dialogue, while well-written, is often delivered in a uniform manner, doubtlessly out of respect for the English fondness of phlegmatism. This adherence to a restrained and steady style, while culturally appropriate, can contribute to a sense of sameness throughout the film. The characters' speeches frequently lack the dynamic shifts in intensity, speed, and emotion that can make conversations more engaging and realistic.

The film features an ensemble cast with numerous characters interacting in a confined space. However, the interactions between these characters often fail to exhibit the rhythmic variations needed to highlight their diverse personalities and emotional states.

Each character should ideally have their own internal rhythm, reflecting their personality and emotional state. In *Gosford Park* many characters seem to operate on a similar rhythmic plane, resulting in interactions that feel flat and unvaried.

The external rhythms, such as physical movements and gestures, also lack diversity. The repetitive and predictable nature of these rhythms can make the film feel static, diminishing the impact of the characters' interactions.

In acting, pauses and beats are crucial for conveying subtext and allowing the audience to absorb emotional nuances. *Gosford Park* often misses opportunities to use these pauses effectively.

Effective pauses can create tension, highlight emotional shifts, and give the audience a moment to reflect. In *Gosford Park* pauses are either too brief to be impactful or too frequent without significant purpose, leading to a loss of dramatic tension.

Breaking down scenes into beats can help in emphasizing emotional and narrative changes. The film's scenes often lack clear beats, causing the narrative to feel monotonous and lacking in emotional depth.

A compelling narrative requires a balance between contrasting rhythms to maintain interest and engagement. *Gosford Park* struggles with creating sufficient contrast in both emotional and physical rhythms among its characters.

The emotional tone of the film remains relatively consistent, with few dramatic shifts. This consistency can lead to emotional fatigue for the audience, as there are no significant high or low points to break the monotony.

The physical actions of the characters, such as their movements and gestures, are often subdued and lack variation. This lack of physical dynamism contributes to the overall sense of dullness.

To avoid these rhythmic failures, the film could have benefited from:

- **Enhanced Scene Structuring:** More distinct transitions between scenes with varying tempos and moods.
- **Dynamic Dialogue Delivery:** Encouraging actors to experiment with different speeds, intensities, and emotional deliveries to create a more varied and engaging dialogue.
- **Effective Use of Pauses:** Strategically placed pauses to build tension and emphasize emotional beats.
- **Character-Specific Rhythms:** Developing unique internal and external rhythms for each character to highlight their individual personalities and emotional states.
- **Contrasting Rhythms:** Balancing the narrative with contrasting emotional and physical rhythms to keep the audience engaged and invested in the story.

By addressing these issues, a film with such a Good screenplay such as *Gosford Park* could have achieved a more dynamic and captivating rhythm, enhancing the overall storytelling and maintaining audience interest throughout the film.

3.1.7. Relationships

In theatre, Stanislavski emphasized "communion," or the connection between actors. Similarly, in film, actors must engage with each other and ensure their interactions are genuine and emotionally resonant. Unlike real-life indifference, actors in a drama should be attuned to each other's emotions, creating a believable and compelling narrative.

This emotional engagement is critical for shaping the film's impact on the audience. Directors often facilitate this by encouraging actors to build off-screen relationships, conduct character workshops, and participate in improvisational exercises. These activities help actors develop a deeper understanding of their characters' relationships and dynamics, which translates into more authentic on-screen interactions.

For example, in a scene where two characters are arguing, the actors must not only deliver their lines convincingly but also respond to each other's emotional cues. This interplay can create a sense of realism and tension, drawing the audience into the story. Directors may use techniques such as axes and eye-line matching (ensuring actors' gazes align) to enhance these relationships on screen.

In a renowned acting class, Michael Caine advised young actors to focus intently on the nearest point to the camera lens, concentrating through a single eye. Additionally, I suggest that an actor should maintain their gaze on the chosen point for at least five seconds. An actor with a wandering gaze can be as distracting to the audience as an inexperienced cameraman who constantly shifts the camera without holding a steady shot for a sufficient duration.

3. 2. The virtual mise-en-scène.

Axes of movement directions are critical in guiding actors' physical movements on set. I prefer this term to "blocking," used by Sir W. S. Gilbert, as "blocking" refers to a block note, while "axes" alludes directly to the tracks where movement directions are set up.

The concept of tracing axes on which simultaneous movements happen within a confined space can be likened to Albrecht Altdorfer's painting "The Battle of Issus." This masterpiece captures a vast array of movements within a single frame, illustrating the boundless possibilities of a cinematic mise-en-scène. By enhancing the depth of field, directors can bring a universe of detail and movement into the scene, much like a living painting. This approach allows filmmakers to create visually rich and intricate compositions that engage the audience on multiple levels.

In *Unforgiven* (1992), one of the finest scenes features William Munny and the Schofield Kid discussing life and death while awaiting the delivery of their reward. An imaginary axis, A to B, or line of action, has been drawn from the farthest point on the road that looms on the horizon to the tree where Munny and Kid deliver the most existential dialogue in the film. Another axis is set between Munny and Kid, though we can observe Munny looking at the axis where the girl that is coming is in order to deaden any emotion from his speech.

Tracing the axes plays a pivotal role in storytelling by enhancing character interactions, emphasizing emotions, and maintaining the visual rhythm of a film. A scene with many axes can convey the underlying tensions and relationships between characters without relying solely on dialogue.

Orson Welles was a master at displaying axes, utilizing them to their fullest potential to enhance storytelling and create memorable cinematic moments. His films provide excellent examples of how movement directions on axes can be used to great effect.

In *Citizen Kane* (1941), Welles uses deep focus cinematography, allowing multiple planes of action to be in sharp focus simultaneously. This technique, combined with precise movements on axes, enables complex interactions within a single shot. For example, in the scene where young Charles Kane is playing outside in the snow while his parents discuss his future inside, the background axis where the child freely plays, and the depth of field draw the viewer's attention to the emotional distance and conflicting interests of the characters.

The famous opening shot of *Touch of Evil* (1958) is a masterclass in axes. This continuous three-minute tracking shot follows a car with a ticking time bomb through the streets of a Mexican border town. Welles meticulously choreographs the movements of the actors, extras, and the camera, all of them moving at a given pace on axes previously marked on the ground, in order to build tension and anticipation. Axes ensure that the viewer's attention is constantly directed towards the car, heightening the suspense as the scene unfolds.

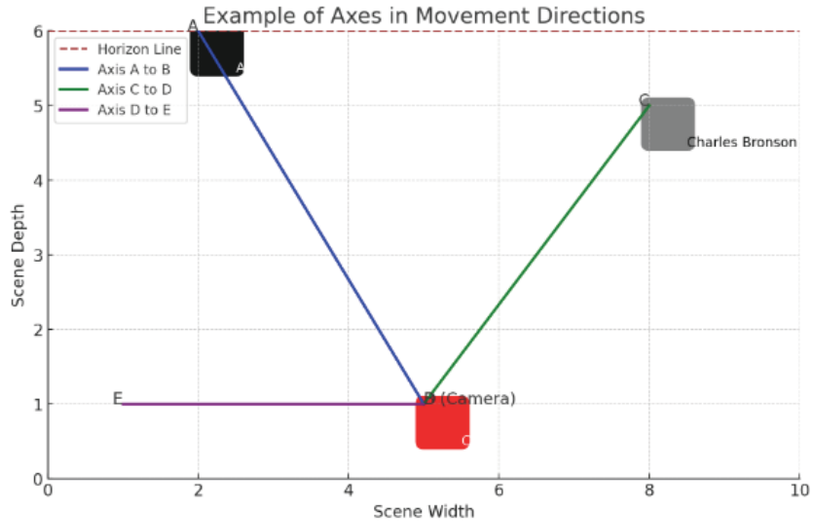
In *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), Welles uses axes to reflect the characters' emotional states and social dynamics. In one notable scene, as the Amberson family gathers in their opulent mansion, Welles positions the characters at varying distances from the camera, symbolizing their emotional estrangement and the family's gradual disintegration. The setting of the axes, combined with the axes given to the crew for camera movements, underscores the themes of pride and downfall central to the narrative.

But it is in *The Trial* (1962) where Welles, making use of the plasticity of nightmares, allows for a more immersive and engaging viewing experience, enhancing the depth of field with dozens of simultaneous axes, e.g., K's office, with hundreds of desks dimly illuminated, or the infamous courtroom, where all members of society find their rank on the stalls in an intimidating audience, or the hellish hallways of social bureaucracy, where we see hundreds of hands coming out along a corridor slit by lights.

By enriching axes, filmmakers and the audience can explore a field that has been hardly explored until now. A filmmaker can thus express not various, but endless elements within the frame simultaneously. Directors like Welles have demonstrated how strategic the use of axes and deep focus can transform a flat, two-dimensional screen into a dynamic, multi-dimensional canvas.

Example of Axes in Movement Directions

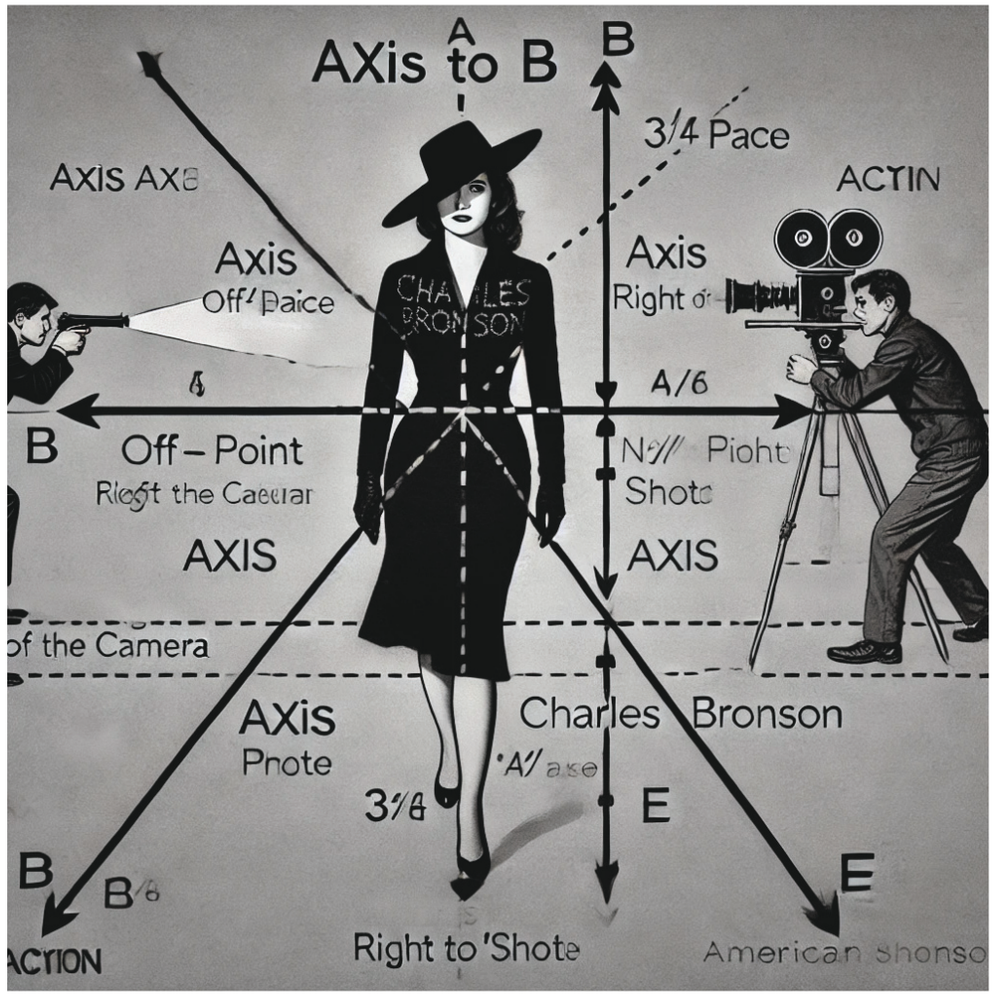
1. **Axis A to B**:
   - **Description**: Mark an axis from point A (the central point on the horizon) to point B (the camera viewfinder) on a given plane.
   - **Action**: Tell an actress dressed in black to start moving from A to B at a ¾ pace speed as soon as you say "Action."
2. **Axis C to D**:
   - **Description**: Add a second axis, perpendicular to the lens of the camera, from point C (off-screen right of the camera) to point D (American shot in front of the camera).
   - **Action**: Have Charles Bronson enter 5 seconds after you say "Action", just leaving enough space for the approaching figure, while projecting a new axis from D to E. Bronson's defiant expression, and his action of taking out a gun, will justify this new axis, as viewers will suspect there is a threat coming from a non-visible point E left behind the camera.



Here's a visual representation of these axes and movements:

1. **Axis A to B**: The blue line indicates the path from point A (horizon) to point B (camera viewfinder).
   - **Actress**: Represented by the black box, moving along this axis.
2. **Axis C to D**: The green line indicates the path from point C (off-screen right) to point D (in front of the camera).
   - **Charles Bronson**: Represented by the grey box, entering 5 seconds later to block the approaching actress.
3. **Axis D to E**: The purple line indicates the new axis projected from point D (in front of the camera) to point E (another focal point), justified by Bronson's defiant expression.
4. **Camera**: Positioned at point B, marked in red.

This setup demonstrates how to choreograph movements on multiple axes to create dynamic and engaging scenes, leveraging the interplay between characters and camera positioning to enhance the narrative and visual impact



4. Supervising Art Direction

Art direction encompasses the visual elements of the film, including sets, locations, props, costumes, and overall style. Directors work closely with the art director to create a cohesive and visually appealing aesthetic that supports the narrative. This supervision ensures that every visual detail contributes to the story, enhances the atmosphere, and maintains consistency throughout the film.

Directors like Sam Mendes demonstrate the significant impact of visual elements on a film's success, as seen in the opening sequence of *Spectre* (2015). Sam Mendes chose to depict Mexico City with a yellowish hue rather than its true-to-life vibrant colours. This choice can be analysed from several perspectives:

1. **Atmospheric Tone:** The yellowish tint creates a sense of heat, dryness, and intensity, which contributes to the suspense and tension of the scene. It evokes an immediate sensory reaction, making the audience feel the oppressive atmosphere.
2. **Visual Consistency:** The yellow filter can help unify the visual style of the sequence, providing a consistent and distinctive look that stands out in the viewers' minds. It can also help differentiate this scene from others in the film, emphasizing its unique setting.
3. **Cultural Perception:** The choice reflects a stylized, almost mythic representation of Mexico, aligning with certain Western cinematic traditions. By using a yellowish tint, Mendes taps into familiar visual cues that audiences might associate with desert landscapes and old Western films, even if these cues are not accurate representations of modern Mexico.
4. **Symbolism of Colour:** The use of yellow and sepia tones is symbolic of classic Western films, which frequently used these colours to convey themes of isolation, lawlessness, and the frontier spirit. In *Spectre*, this symbolism is repurposed to add a layer of myth and legend to the modern setting of Mexico City.
5. **Contrast with Reality:** The stylized representation contrasts sharply with the vibrant, colourful reality of Mexico City, highlighting the film's creative liberties. This choice underscores the film's narrative, focusing on atmosphere and mood over strict realism.

A colour palette is a selection of colours used consistently throughout a film or production to create a specific mood, convey themes, and enhance the storytelling. The choice of colours can significantly affect the audience's emotional response and the overall atmosphere of the film.

Colours evoke specific emotions and associations:

Warm Colours (reds, oranges, yellows): Often convey warmth, passion, and energy.

Cool Colours (blues, greens, purples): Typically evoke calmness, serenity, and melancholy.

Monochromatic Palettes: Use variations of a single colour for a harmonious and cohesive look.

Complementary Palettes: Use colours opposite each other on the colour wheel for contrast and vibrancy.

While the application of colour theory can be subjective, it is not capricious. It is based on well-established principles that guide the effective use of colour in visual storytelling.

How to Become a Good Art Director

1. **Study Art Styles:** Gain a comprehensive understanding of various art styles and historical periods. This knowledge will provide a foundation for

creating visually rich and authentic designs.

2. **Combine Styles:** Develop the ability to blend different styles creatively. This skill can help you create unique and memorable visual environments.

3. **Experiment:** Don't be afraid to try new techniques and materials. Experimentation can lead to innovative and exciting visual results.

4. **Build a Portfolio:** Create a strong portfolio showcasing your range and creativity in art direction. Include projects that highlight your ability to create cohesive and original visual styles.

5. **Collaborate and Communicate:** Effective collaboration and communication with directors, designers, and other team members are crucial. Understand the director's vision and work towards realizing it visually.

6. **Stay Updated:** Keep up with the latest trends and technologies in art direction. Continuous learning and adaptation are key to staying relevant and innovative in the field.

By focusing on these areas, aspiring art directors can develop the skills and creativity needed to excel in the field and make a significant impact on their projects.

5. Mise-en-scène II: Directing crew members.

We define a plane as a surface composed of infinite lines, and cinema is projected over such a plane. A film director operates within the realm of infinite possibilities. The mise-en-scène involves orchestrating these possibilities to create a cohesive and engaging visual narrative. Directing crew members is a critical aspect of this process, encompassing various stages that ensure the film's visual and narrative coherence.

5.1. Storyboard

The storyboard illustrates the movements between characters and objects in specific scenarios. Jean Mitry rightly noted that montage occurs not only in post-production, as Eisenstein prescribed, but also in preproduction. A well-prepared storyboard serves as a visual script, guiding the director and crew through the film's scenes and shots.

Many directors in the Indian film industry, for instance, choose to bypass this step and shoot without storyboards. While this approach may adhere to the rules of TV studio productions, such as respecting the 180º axis, it often diminishes the cinematography of the film. German expressionists used the term "angles" for innovative shots, and Orson Welles, regarded as the last great expressionist of cinema, continues to astonish new generations of viewers with his bold use of angles.

Even so, a storyboard helps visualize the director's vision, ensuring that everyone involved understands the intended shot composition, camera movements, and blocking. It serves as a blueprint for the production, reducing misunderstandings and enhancing efficiency on set.

5.2. Scouting Locations

Most settings are aesthetically pleasing rather than intellectually stimulating. Every director of photography understands that their choice of framing reflects culture and technology. However, the belief in the permanence of culture and technology has waned. The language of the voyeur, the paparazzi, and TV news reporters has been assimilated into cinema through documentary filmmaking. What matters is not just the composition of space but also the choreography of objects within the frame.

Aesthetic and Functional Choices: Scouting locations involves finding settings that enhance the story's visual and thematic elements. The location must serve the narrative while providing practical advantages for shooting. This includes considering lighting, accessibility, and how the space interacts with the characters and objects.

5.3. Shooting

When the storyboard is diligently followed, the technical aspects of shooting become a matter of execution. However, the final performance of the actors demands full attention from the director and script assistant. The director guides actors through multiple takes until their performance reaches an exceptional level, while the script assistant ensures continuity.

While we all observe movies and expect movement within a film, movement is not solely the privilege of the observer or the lens.

Ozu's films feature static frames in which actors execute elaborate choreographies and movements. Directors of photography confront a world set in motion by the director of the factual mise-en-scène.

- **Execution:** The director ensures that the storyboard's vision is realized on set. This involves coordinating the camera crew, lighting technicians, and actors to capture the planned shots effectively.
- **Actor Guidance:** Directors must communicate their vision clearly to actors, helping them understand their characters' motivations and actions within each scene. Multiple takes may be necessary to achieve the desired performance.
- **Continuity:** The script assistant plays a crucial role in maintaining continuity, ensuring that details remain consistent across shots and scenes.

A torn shot may resemble a postcard to new viewers, occurring when a subject crosses the frame from side to side within a static shot. Slow movement becomes the focus within these frames, such as the clouds passing in front of the moon in *Un Chien Andalou*.

5.4. Marketing and Promotion

After the completion of filming, the director's role extends to marketing and promotion. Ensuring that the film reaches its intended audience and generates interest is crucial for its success.

- **Strategies:** Developing trailers, posters, and promotional material that accurately represent the film's tone and content.
- **Public Engagement:** Engaging with audiences through interviews, social media, and film festivals to create buzz and attract viewers.

The process of directing crew members through the various stages of film production is integral to achieving a cohesive and compelling mise-en-scène. From storyboarding and location scouting to shooting and promotion, each step requires careful planning and execution. By mastering these elements, directors can bring their vision to life and create films that resonate with audiences both visually and emotionally.

6. Supervising the Editing of the Film

Editing is where the film truly comes together. Directors must oversee the editing process to ensure that the final cut aligns with their vision. This involves selecting the best takes, determining the pacing, and deciding on transitions and effects.

Battleship Potemkin (Eisenstein, 1925)

Directors like Sergei Eisenstein, who believed in the power of montage, highlight the critical role of editing in shaping the film's narrative and emotional impact. Effective editing can transform raw footage into a compelling and cohesive story, as he demonstrated in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) a Manichean film renowned for its innovative use of montage, a technique.

Montage involves the juxtaposition of short, powerful shots to create a new meaning not inherent in the individual shots themselves. This technique was used to great effect in several key sequences of the film:

1. The Odessa Steps Sequence: Perhaps the most famous example of Eisenstein's editing mastery, this sequence uses rapid cuts to create intense drama and build emotional resonance. The use of montage in this scene juxtaposes the chaos and brutality of the Tsarist troops' massacre of civilians with close-ups of individual suffering, such as the baby carriage tumbling down the steps. This creates a powerful emotional impact and a sense of urgency and horror.

2. Rhythmic Editing: Eisenstein's editing is characterized by a rhythmic quality that controls the pace of the narrative. By varying the duration of shots, he creates a dynamic flow that maintains viewer interest and builds tension effectively.

3. Symbolic Montage: Eisenstein used montage to convey symbolic meanings, such as the repeated shots of the breaking plates and the rebellion of the sailors. These visual metaphors enhance the political message of the film, emphasizing themes of oppression and revolution.

Triumph of the Will (Leni Riefenstahl, 1935)

Triumph of the Will is a controversial film due to its propaganda content, glorifying the Nazi regime. The film uses editing to create an awe-inspiring portrayal of the Nazi party congress. By combining grandiose imagery with powerful music, Riefenstahl creates a sense of unity and invincibility among the Nazi followers.

The editing incorporates a variety of camera angles and movements, including sweeping aerial shots and close-ups of Hitler, to create a larger-than-life image of the leader. The transitions between these shots are smooth and deliberate, enhancing the propaganda effect.

Riefenstahl uses the pacing of her edits to build momentum and excitement. The rhythm of the cuts aligns with the music and speeches, creating a seamless blend of audio and visual elements that captivates the audience and underscores the film's message. By carefully selecting which scenes to emphasize, such as the enthusiastic crowds and disciplined soldiers sharing their comradeship with homoerotic nuances, Riefenstahl manipulates the narrative to glorify the Nazi regime. The film's editing ensures that the power and order of the Nazis are continuously highlighted.

Whereas in *Battleship Potemkin*, Eisenstein's use of montage revolutionized film editing, creating a dynamic and emotionally charged narrative that reduces the complexity of politics to a melodramatic strife, in *Triumph of the Will*, Riefenstahl's meticulous editing techniques crafted an effective piece of propaganda, manipulating the viewer's perception to glorify the Nazi regime. Despite the controversial nature of Eisenstein's and Riefenstahl's propaganda films, both directors/editors exemplify how editing can be used to shape a film's narrative, emotional impact, and ideological message.

Movies destined to fail saved by editors

Effective editing is a crucial element in filmmaking that can save a project from potential failure. By carefully selecting takes, determining pacing, and making critical decisions about transitions and effects, editors can transform raw footage into a compelling and cohesive story. Directors must oversee this process to ensure that the final cut aligns with their vision, as evidenced by the significant impact of editing in films like *Jaws*, *Star Wars*, *Blade Runner*, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, and *Mad Max: Fury Road*. These examples highlight the transformative power of skilled editing in filmmaking.

Jaws (Spielberg, 1975) faced numerous production issues, including mechanical problems with the shark, which limited the footage of the creature. Verna Fields' editing turned these limitations into strengths by using quick cuts and suspenseful pacing to create a sense of terror. The shark was rarely seen, building tension and fear through implication rather than direct visual horror. This editing choice played a significant role in making *Jaws* a classic thriller.

The initial rough cut of *Star Wars* (Lucas, 1977) was considered problematic and lacked the excitement and coherence that George Lucas envisioned. The editors, Paul Hirsch, Marcia Lucas, and Richard Chew, restructured the film, tightening the pacing and improving the flow of action scenes. Marcia Lucas' contributions, in particular, were pivotal in enhancing the emotional arcs and ensuring the film's narrative clarity. The revamped editing turned *Star Wars* into a ground-breaking success.

The original cut of *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982) included a voiceover narration and a happy ending, which were added due to studio pressure. These elements were widely criticized for diminishing the film's atmospheric depth and ambiguity. In 1992, Ridley Scott released the Director's Cut, which removed the voiceover and restored the original, more ambiguous ending. This version, edited with Terry Rawlings' input, was much better received and is considered the definitive version of the film.

The production of *Bohemian Rhapsody* (2018) faced challenges, including the replacement of its director. John Ottman's editing was crucial in maintaining narrative

coherence and emotional impact, particularly in the film's concert sequences. The Live Aid performance, in particular, was meticulously edited to capture the energy and significance of the event, contributing significantly to the film's critical and commercial success.

Mad Max: Fury Road (2015) narrative is driven by high-octane action sequences that could easily become chaotic and confusing. Margaret Sixel's editing ensured clarity and maintained the story's pace and intensity. Her ability to balance the action with character moments allowed the film to be both thrilling and emotionally resonant, earning widespread acclaim and multiple awards.

Film directors play a pivotal role in shaping the success of a film through careful screenplay selection, assembling a skilled crew, directing performances, supervising art direction, and overseeing editing.

Reimagining Film Direction: Bridging Traditional Methods and AI Technology

As the industry evolves with technological advancements like AI, the opportunities for creative expression and innovation continue to expand, offering new possibilities for filmmakers worldwide, as we can see in this table

Aspect of Filmmaking	Traditional Lessons from Filmmaking Handbooks	Predictions for AI-Driven Cinema
Screenplay Selection	Directors meticulously choose scripts that align with their vision and the film's intended message.	AI algorithms analyse and recommend screenplays based on themes, character development, and potential audience engagement. NLP tools evaluate scripts for originality and alignment with the director's style.
Assembling a Skilled Crew	Directors gather a team of talented individuals (actors, cinematographers, sound designers, etc.).	Virtual crew members, such as AI-generated characters and synthetic voices, replace human counterparts. AI-driven software handles lighting, camera angles, and sound design, ensuring consistent quality and creative control.
Directing Performances	Directors guide actors to deliver compelling performances through rehearsals and on-set direction.	AI avatars or digital doubles are directed through software that adjusts their emotions, movements, and dialogues based on the director's inputs. Machine learning models simulate realistic human behaviours and expressions, allowing for precise control over each performance.
Supervising Art Direction	Directors work with production designers to create visually appealing and thematically consistent sets.	AI tools generate virtual sets and environments using procedural generation techniques, allowing real-time modifications by the director. Directors can experiment with different visual styles and atmospheres without physical constraints.

Aspect of Filmmaking	Traditional Lessons from Filmmaking Handbooks	Predictions for AI-Driven Cinema
Overseeing Editing	Directors collaborate with editors to piece together the film, ensuring a coherent and engaging narrative.	AI-driven editing software assembles rough cuts based on the director's storyboard and preferences. Advanced algorithms handle colour grading, sound mixing, and visual effects, allowing the director to focus on fine-tuning the final product.
Creative Expression and Innovation	Directors use traditional techniques and creative instincts to craft the film's visual and emotional tone.	AI enhances creativity by providing adaptive tools, such as AI-generated music scores and predictive audience reaction analytics, enabling directors to refine their work based on data-driven insights. AI democratizes filmmaking, making it accessible to a wider range of creators and fostering diversity and innovation.
Emotional Memory and Physical Actions	Stanislavski's methods involve generating emotions internally and through physical actions to create authentic performances.	AI can simulate emotional and physical responses, allowing virtual actors to portray genuine emotions. Techniques like Emotional Memory can be encoded into AI models to recall and evoke specific emotional states.
Involuntary Memory in Acting	Actors use physical objects and actions to trigger memories and emotions, enhancing authenticity.	AI can use data from real actors' experiences to generate accurate emotional responses in virtual actors. Sensory triggers can be simulated to evoke realistic emotional portrayals.
Actor's Craft as Ritual	Acting is viewed as a ritualistic process that involves deep emotional and psychological engagement.	AI can replicate the ritualistic aspects of acting by simulating the process of emotional immersion and character development, allowing directors to create deeply engaging and authentic virtual performances.
Impact of Technology on Filmmaking	Technological advancements continually expand creative possibilities and streamline production processes.	AI technology revolutionizes filmmaking by automating complex tasks, enhancing creative control, and making high-quality production accessible to a broader range of filmmakers. AI-driven tools offer unprecedented opportunities for innovation and artistic expression.

This table compares traditional methods of filmmaking with predictions of how AI could transform these elements, illustrating how traditional principles can adapt and evolve with advanced technology.

10. Ideology

Dialectical and rhetorical drama

From an ideological standpoint, a drama can be dialectic or rhetorical.

Dialectical when it exposes the flaws of a political system, rhetorical when it conceals them or ignores them. This distinction, formulated by Aristotle, bears the double-edged sword of ideology. In his early study of the birth of tragedy, Nietzsche, very much under the ideology of the French Revolution, placed the patriarchal warlike arguments of Aeschylus' characters over the pacifist discourses of Euripides'.

Having elucidated the archaeology of modern scholarship, Michel Foucault confessed in an interview to be a possible victim of the main prejudices of his age. Ideology appears as a hydra, with unexpected consequences. As mainstream filmmaking is presented as an industry, most films are but displays of rhetorical figures.

As early as 1947, the school of Frankfurt dismissed cinema as mere entertainment, free of economic and political connotations:

> "value judgments are taken either as advertising or as empty talk. Accordingly, ideology has been made vague and noncommittal, and thus neither clearer nor weaker. Its very vagueness, its almost scientific aversion from committing itself to anything which cannot be verified, acts as an instrument of domination[55]."

George Bernard Shaw went as far as to denounce the idiocy of artists unable to discuss the politics of their work. Venturing into linguistics, Shaw referred his invective to the Greek prefix i = non, and the verb dioto = concern with domestic issues. An idiot would be any firm believer of the 19th-century motto: Ars gratia artis (art for art's sake).

For most of the 20th century, the global influence of American producers shaped ideology and morals. A compromise was reached with the intellectuality, and the cinema of Welles, Chaplin and Huston came to light. An act that would not have been possible without the alleged disinterest in politics of the Hollywood studio system[56], a dream from which the studios would be abruptly awakened by Senator Joseph Raymond McCarthy.

As artists unveil ideology, they pave the way for a different world. Henryk Ibsen endured fierce criticism after "A Doll's House," his play in prose, opened with an avant-garde ending that represented women as unpredictable human beings. After experiencing her husband's selfishness and conceit, Norma Helmer forsakes her family, an act emulated in the 1970s by Meryl Streep in Kramer Vs. Kramer (1979).

Rhetorical films share the variations of the Manichaean and submissive ethical structures of narration. All tragic films are dialectical by virtue of their solemnity. As in theatre, dialectical films are often the cause of controversy and violence. On the day after *L'âge d'or* (Buñuel, 1930) was released, two extreme right-wing vigilante groups, the Patriot's League and the Anti-Jewish League stormed the theatre, hurling ink and rotten eggs at the movie screen, setting off tear gas and stink bombs. *The Surrealist* published a

55 Adorno and Horkheimer, Op. cit., p. 147.
56 See Carrington, Robert, The Making of Citizen Kane (UCP, 1996)

manifesto condemning the incident, while the leftist press came to Buñuel's defence. *Le Figaro*, meanwhile, dismissed the film as an exercise of Bolshevism.

Dialectical directors are often martyrs of their craft: Eisenstein, Keaton, Chaplin, Welles, Fassbinder, Pasolini. Welles' Citizen Kane received nine nominations for the 1941 Academy Awards; as William Randolph Hearst—the American tycoon whose life resembled Kane's, ordered the editors of his newspapers and magazines to hamper the distribution of the film, the actors, producers, and crews of Hollywood closed ranks against Welles. He lost for best picture, best actor, and best director before an audience that booed his work. Citizen Kane received a single Oscar for best screenplay and was discreetly shelved in the RKO vaults.

The protectors of the status quo may also understand that complaisance deadens dissent. Wenders' *Alice in den Städten (Alice in the Cities,* 1973) was promoted by the very media that one of Wenders' characters calls there "inhuman." By that time Mark Robson had already denounced boxing as a pernicious sport in *The Harder They Fall* (1956.) But, as in Hamlet, we are before spectators who no longer expect lectures on morality from a play. The denunciation of Nazism, which Chaplin represented with sarcasm in *The Great Dictator* (1940,) is a source of laughter at the façade of political conformism, which insists on denying the socialist credentials of the Nazis.

Today very few would discuss the duties of a film director. We see them on TV organizing crew members and asking actors to perform in front of heavy lighting equipment. We can, however, reflect on the principles that define the profession.

Aristotle exiled dialectical drama to the sphere of entertainment

In the ancient world, there was a clear distinction between tragedy and comedy on the stage. Tragedy typically dealt with serious themes, often involving the downfall of a noble character due to their own flaws or the workings of fate. Comedy, on the other hand, focused on humorous situations, often involving misunderstandings, mistaken identities, and light-heartedness.

The term "tragicomedy" was indeed originally coined by Plautus in his comedy "Amphitryon." In this comedy, adapted from a previous one now lost by Menander, Plautus presents Jupiter, a character typically reserved for tragic playwrights, as one of the main characters in a farcical comedy performed by slaves:

faciam ut commixta sit: <sit> tragicomoedia.
nam me perpetuo facere ut sit comoedia,
reges quo veniant et di, non par arbitror.
quid igitur? quoniam hic servos quoque partes habet,
faciam sit, proinde ut dixi, tragicomoedia.
nunc hoc me orare a vobis iussit Iuppiter

I will make it mixed: it is a tragicomedy.
That I will perpetually make a comedy
I don't think it's a match for kings to come and give (beatings).
What then? Since this also has a share of slaves,

I will make it, therefore, as I said, a tragicomedy[57].

This passage highlights Plautus's intention to mix elements of tragedy and comedy in his play. He acknowledges that while the presence of Jupiter, a divine figure, may suggest a more serious theme, the inclusion of comedic elements, such as the portrayal of servants, transforms the play into a "tragicomedy."

Although Plautus blends elements of both tragedy and comedy in "Amphitryon," he does so in a farcical manner, emphasizing the comedic aspects of the play rather than presenting a serious theme with comic relief. The use of Jupiter in a comedic context was a clever and humorous way for Plautus to merge the sacred theatrical traditions of Greece with the popular comedy of Rome, creating a unique and entertaining theatrical experience for his audience.

Medieval biblical adaptations

During medieval times, biblical adaptations were performed during holidays in front of churches. These performances combined elements of tragedy and comedy, resulting in a synthesis that laid the groundwork for modern dramaturgy.

In these medieval biblical adaptations, tragic elements were often present, particularly in stories depicting the suffering of Christ or the trials of biblical figures. However, comedic elements were also integrated, often in the form of humorous dialogue, witty exchanges, or comic relief characters:

> "Wooden platforms and scaffolds were erected on sites specially staked out, tableaux vivants were carried along in procession and went into scenic action at predetermined stations. While once upon a time wealthy Athenian citizens and ambitious Roman consuls had vied for the honour of financing theatrical spectacles, their place was taken in the late medieval community by the guilds and corporations. Alongside the Gospel, they discovered and explored the inexhaustible store of mime, of the actor's art in all its potentialities— the Shrovetide play (Fastnachtsspiel) and peasant play, the farce, sottie, allegory, and morality play[58]."

This blending of tragedy and comedy allowed for a more nuanced exploration of human experience, encompassing both the solemnity of tragedy and the levity of comedy. It also provided audiences with a richer and more diverse theatrical experience, reflecting the complexity of life itself.

Ultimately, the combination of tragedy and comedy in medieval biblical adaptations played a significant role in shaping the development of modern dramaturgy, influencing subsequent theatrical traditions and paving the way for the diverse range of dramatic genres and styles seen in contemporary theatre, as Lope de Vega put it.

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57 Plautus. (2011). Amphitryon. In W. de Melo (Ed. & Trans.), Amphitryon. The Comedy of Asses. The Pot of Gold. The Two Bacchises. The Captives (pp. 1-133). Harvard University Press.

58 Berthold, M. (1972). A history of world theater (Translation of Weltgeschichte des Theaters). New York: Ungar., p. 229.

The mixture of tragedy with comedy…
Will make a part earnest, another laughable;
Which this variety pleases greatly[59].

Originally conceived as an analysis of tragedy, the technical descriptions of *Poetics* suited both the dramatic sensitivity of Elizabethan theatre and the technical challenges of the golden age of Spanish literature theatre. D. W. Lucas writes on this issue:

> "poietikhs... as the subject of a book it would recall the tecne retorike, the Handbook of Rhetoric; the purpose of this books, which had been in existence for a century or more..., was to teach the art of speaking, but [*Poetics*' object] is mainly to define the nature and function of poetry, though instructions for the poet are included[60]."

Aristotle realized that originality of poetry could be traced in the structure of the play, rather than in the beauty of the verses:

> "It clearly follows that the poet or 'maker' should be the maker of plots rather than of verses (Poet., 9)[61]".

Based on his own experience as a spectator of Greek poetry, epic, and drama, Aristotle deduced a series of narrative principles that became widely circulated in academic circles across Athens, Rome, Constantinople, Cordoba, Istanbul, Paris, and Beverly Hills. The reputation of *Poetics* can be attributed to its sharp description of the elements of drama, but also to its apparent lack of interest in the ethics of narration. Although Aristotle distinguishes the dialectics of the older poets from the rhetoric of the contemporary (Poet., 6), he abstains from any further analysis on the subject and refers the reader to his treatise on 'Rhetoric[62]," in which he defines rhetoric as a half-dialectic, half deceiving reasoning referred to ethics and politics (Rhet., 1, 2).

Unlike Plato, Aristotle did not delve into the effects of poetry on children's education in his work. *Poetics* primarily delves into the internal mechanisms of dramaturgy, with particular attention to the emotions evoked by the spectacle.

Philosophy versus poetry

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59 Lo trágico y lo cómico mezclado (…)
harán grave una parte, otra ridícula,
que aquesta variedad deleita mucho.
(Vega, Lope de. (1983). El Nuevo Arte de Hacer Comedias, en Obras Poéticas. Planeta. pp. 174-178).

60 Lucas, D. W. (1968). Appendix. In Aristotle's Poetics (p. 53). Oxford University Press.

61 Aristotle. (1895). Poetics (S. H. Butcher, Trans.). London: Macmillan.

62 "Concerning Thought, we may assume what is said in the Rhetoric, to which inquiry the subject more strictly belongs" (Poet., 19)

As a result, Aristotelian aesthetics, divorced from ethics, gradually diminished the social role of creativity in the centuries that followed. When Benjamin Constant advocated for 'art for art's sake'— *L'art pour l'art*, at the beginning of the 19th century, he essentially formalized the ideology of 'Poetics· Cinema, a by-product of the industrial revolution, emerged as an art for the masses, but seldom as an art about the masses.

With little interest in debating the societal effects of mechanized art, early producers and directors of commercial cinema readily embraced the formalistic precepts of 'Poetics.'

Guy Debord acknowledged the power of television in shaping contemporary society.

> "Consumable pseudocyclical time is spectacular time, both in the narrow sense as time spent consuming images and in the broader sense as image of the consumption of time. The time spent consuming images (images which in turn serve to publicize all the other commodities) is both the particular terrain where the spectacle's mechanisms are most fully implemented and the general goal that those mechanisms present, the focus and epitome of all particular consumptions. Thus, the time that modern society is constantly seeking to "save" by increasing transportation speeds or using packaged soups ends up being spent by the average American in watching television three to six hours a day[63]."

Television sets itself apart from other media not only through its global reach but also through its visual continuity, a legacy inherited from the Hollywood studio production system. Whether it's news reports, soap operas, TV commercials, travel documentaries, or music video clips, all are visual narratives with a clear beginning, middle, and end.

In spite of his manifest animadversion towards spectacle[64], Aristotle suggests that frenetic music and special effects can evoke catharsis (κάθαρσις), which is the purging of pity and fear, resulting in the pleasure of the play (Poet., 14).

In tragedies, the lines delivered by the chorus are often sung with rhythmic movement. Music is seen as enhancing language. Spectacle is considered the least important element, as the power of tragedy does not solely rely on its performance; the art of spectacle belongs more to the set designer than the poet.

Aristotle's analysis of tragedy is fundamentally deductive. He systematically deconstructs the elements of tragedy to identify the core components that contribute to its emotional and intellectual impact. This methodical approach has proven enduringly relevant, providing a foundational framework for understanding and crafting narrative structures.

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63 Debord, Guy (2014). The Society of the Spectacle, tr. Ken Knabb. The Anarchist Library, 62.

64 "The Spectacle has, indeed, an emotional attraction of its own, but, of all the parts, it is the least artistic, and connected least with the art of poetry." (Poet., 6)

Deductive Analysis

Aristotle's deductive approach begins with observations of successful tragedies, from which he derives general principles. He identifies key elements such as plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and song, emphasizing the primacy of plot as the soul of a tragedy. This hierarchical organization underscores the importance of a well-constructed narrative in eliciting emotional responses, particularly pity and fear, leading to catharsis.

The principles of *Poetics* continue to inspire creativity by offering a clear understanding of the mechanics of storytelling. For instance, the concept of catharsis, with its focus on emotional purgation, remains relevant in understanding audience reactions to modern dramas and tragedies. Similarly, Aristotle's insights into character development and the interplay between plot and character actions are crucial for creating multidimensional characters that drive the story forward.

Modern screenwriters and playwrights continue to draw upon these principles, consciously or unconsciously, in their storytelling. The structural elements that Aristotle delineated—such as the necessity for a clear beginning, middle, and end, and the importance of maintaining unity of action—are evident in contemporary screenwriting manuals and workshops.

The enduring validity of Aristotle's analysis is evident in the continued success of narratives that adhere to his principles. Films and shows that follow the principle of causality, as we explained it in the previous chapter on Cinema and Perception, have a well-structured plot, with clear character motivations and a satisfying resolution, tend to resonate deeply with audiences, affirming Aristotle's insights into the nature of effective storytelling.

These principles have been adapted and expanded upon by modern screenwriting gurus, whose influence permeates the film and television industry. Screenwriting authorities such as Syd Field, Robert McKee, and Blake Snyder have distilled Aristotle's ideas into practical guidelines for aspiring writers.

Field's paradigm of the three-act structure, McKee's emphasis on story and structure, and Snyder's "Save the Cat!" approach all echo Aristotelian concepts. Hollywood producers and streaming platforms frequently seek content that adheres to these tried-and-true narrative structures, recognizing their effectiveness in capturing and maintaining audience interest. This adherence can foster creativity by providing writers with a reliable blueprint for developing their stories.

However, it can also be a source of contention, as the formulaic nature of many mainstream films and shows is often criticized for stifling originality. The creative process involves not only following established guidelines but also pushing the boundaries of these conventions to explore new forms of storytelling. This tension between structure and innovation is at the heart of the ongoing evolution of narrative art.

Philosophy defeats poetry

Any spectacle, any entertainment, encourages creativity. Contrary to Plato, Aristotle pays little attention to poetic inspiration. As the scholastics rightly understood, Aristotle's pretended vindication of poetry is rather a satire against Plato. Plato didn't

intend to exclude the poets from the Republic, but rather to establish a rigorous censorship on poetry in conformity with a warlike educational policy.

Susan Sontag captures the essence of Poetics when she wrote:

> "When Aristotle said that poetry was more philosophical than history, he was justified insofar as he wanted to rescue poetry, that is, the arts, from being conceived as a type of factual, particular, descriptive statement. But what he said was misleading insofar as it suggests that art supplies something like what philosophy gives us: an argument[65]."

We may further argue that Aristotle's characterization of poetry as philosophical[66], and by stating that it *bends* towards the universal, Aristotle achieves what Plato was unable to accomplish through his arguments: to establish the superiority of philosophy over poetry.

Despite Aristotle's more favourable view of poetry, he still relegates it to a secondary status compared to philosophy. The poet, in Aristotle's schema, operates within the realm of entertainment (divertimento) rather than rigorous dialectical inquiry. This subordination of poetry to philosophy was reflected in the scholarly debates of European universities, where the analysis of tragedy often centered on its structural and thematic unity, duration, and purpose. These debates, rooted in Aristotelian principles, underscored the notion that dramatic arts were valuable primarily as vehicles for philosophical and ethical reflection, rather than as ends in themselves.

The tension between poetry and philosophy persisted until the early nineteenth century when figures like Novalis began to restore a semblance of harmony between the two disciplines. Novalis and his contemporaries in the Romantic movement sought to integrate the emotional and imaginative aspects of poetry with the rational and abstract elements of philosophy. This reconciliation, however, was often tentative and incomplete, reflecting the enduring influence of Aristotle's hierarchical distinction.

Evaluation of the Poets by Aristotle

Aristotle's evaluation of poets is nuanced, as he criticizes those who prioritize versification over plot construction while praising those who strive to emulate philosophers. Ultimately, he characterizes all poets as "gods or madmen." This dichotomy highlights the tension between inspiration and rationality in the creative process.

> "...all poets are, by nature, full of passion and prone to impulses, as Aristotle says. For this reason, some have been called gods, and others, madmen." - Poetics (1455a)

The "divine" poet is one who channels his creative energy into the construction of

65 Sontag, Susan, On Style, in Against Interpretation, p. 15.
66 Dio kai filosofwteron kai spoudaioteron poiesis istorias estin (Poet., 9)

coherent and philosophically significant narratives. These poets are praised for their ability to emulate philosophers, creating works that reflect universal truths and contribute to the intellectual and moral development of their audience.

On the other hand, the "mad" poet embodies a more chaotic and uncontrolled form of creativity. This type of poet may prioritize emotional expression and imaginative freedom over logical coherence and philosophical rigor. While his works may be full of emotional and imaginative depth, they may lack the structured coherence that Aristotle values.

This characterization reflects Aristotle's broader philosophical commitments, particularly his preference for reasoned discourse and the search for universal truths about the sometimes contradictory and fragmented nature of purely emotional or inspired creations.

Multiplicity and Contradiction in Poetry

Aristotle's acknowledgment of the poet's ability to craft discourses within a single play that may contradict one another suggests a recognition of the complexity and multiplicity of human experience. This ability to present contradictory ideas within a single work aligns with the idea that poetry, unlike philosophy, avoids definitions on reality and human nature.

Aristotle's reluctance to analyse discourses that reject universal laws leads him to focus on the emotional impact of tragedy. He states,

> "Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action... through pity and fear affecting the proper purgation (κάθαρσις) of these emotions" (Poetics, 6).

Drawing from a passage in "Politics" where Aristotle mentions catharsis once more, Renaissance interpreters understood drama either as a therapeutic process or as an ethical action. Similar to music, drama was believed to strengthen citizens' inclinations toward terror and compassion. The exceptions to the rule were quietly dismissed by University Professors. Torquato Tasso, for instance, judges the originality of a poem by its main conflict and resolution:

> "The novelty of the poem... consists in the novelty of the knot and the resolution of the fable[67]."

But κάθαρσις refers primarily to the climax, that is, to the resolution of the tragedy's main conflict. Aristotle describes drama as a pleasant experience, far more intense than reading and declamation:

> "And superior it [tragedy] is, because it has all the epic elements- it may even

67 "La novità del poema... consiste ne la novità del nodo e de lo scioglimento de la favola." Tasso, T. (1587). Discorsi dell'arte poetica ed in particolare sopra il poema eroico (Vol. I, p. 25). Agostini.

use the epic metre, with the music and spectacular effects as important accessories; and these produce the most vivid of pleasures (poet., 26)".

The hedonic aspect of drama, apparently condemned by medieval monks[68], was also vindicated by Bertold Brecht:

> "Thus, what the ancients, following Aristotle, demanded of tragedy is nothing higher or lower than that it should entertain people... [κάθαρσις] is performed not only in a pleasurable way, but precisely for the purpose of pleasure[69]."

The assumption that κάθαρσις —or the cleansing of the passions, happens during the climax of the drama, contrasts with the ubiquitous definition of κάθαρσις included in the 'Tractatus Coisliniamus'—a text arguable attributed to Aristotle, in which κάθαρσις occurs after each laugh:

> "Comedy…[accomplishes] by means of pleasure and laughter the catharsis of such emotions[70]."

Poetics constitutes a reformulation of poetry. Aristotle insists on the etymology of the word (ποιησισ—from ποιεω: to make to fabricate,) in order to define poets as makers of plots.

Once he has established the ideal length of a play, Aristotle places Homer, the official poet of Athens, in a rank inferior to Aeschylus and Sophocles. The art (τεχνε) of composing verses—still present in the definition of tragedy, is excluded from the list of constitutive elements of drama:

> "Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious… *in language embellished*… [which] must have six parts… Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, Song" (Poet., 6.)

Poetic inspiration should be surveyed according to the plot-making inventiveness of the poet. Weavers of incidents and conflicts, the poets will gradually sacrifice versification in order to become playwrights. Centuries before the establishment of naturalistic cinema, Aristotle hinted that the elaborated verses of Greek drama would be replaced by colloquial speech:

> "Aeschylus first introduced a second actor… Once dialogue had come in, Nature herself discovered the appropriate measure. For the iambic is, of all

68 "Pleasure and guilt are synonymous terms in the language of the monks." Gibbon, E. (1781). The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (Vol. IV, p. 37). London: Strahan & Cadell.

69 Bertold Brecht, Journal Notes, p. 157.

70 Tractatus Coislinianus. (1987). (R. Janko, Trans.). Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, p. 45.

> measures, the most colloquial we see it in the fact that conversational speech runs into iambic lines more frequently than into any other kind of verse" (Poet., 4.)

The unflavoured dialogues of commercial cinema are the most recent manifestation of poetic drama. The survival of versified poetry had been already at stake during Aristotle's lifetime:

> "Ariphrades ridiculed the tragedians for using phrases which no one would employ in ordinary speech" (Poet., 22.)

Aristotle's avoidance of thorny political issues

Aristotle's avoidance of thorny political issues in his *Poetics* can be seen in the context of his time, particularly considering Alexander the Great's growing imperial ambitions and the spreading wars as far as India. The formalist analysis presented in *Poetics* has led to its traditional interpretation as an apolitical treatise. However, a closer examination of Aristotle's dramatic preferences reveals an underlying ideology. By focusing on specific types of plays and omitting others, Aristotle subtly endorses certain political and social values while steering clear of more controversial themes.

The political climate during Aristotle's lifetime was marked by significant upheaval and expansion under Alexander the Great. As Alexander's teacher, Aristotle was acutely aware of the political sensitivities and the potential repercussions of endorsing controversial views. In *Poetics,* Aristotle omits analysis of some of the most politically charged Greek tragedies, such as "Prometheus Bound," "Antigone," and "Women of Troy." These plays tackle themes of rebellion against tyranny, the conflict between individual conscience and state law, and the horrors of war, respectively.

"Prometheus Bound" deals with the defiance of Prometheus against Zeus's tyrannical rule, "Antigone" portrays the struggle of an individual's moral duty against the edicts of the state, and "Women of Troy" depicts the brutal aftermath of war and the suffering of the conquered. By excluding these works, Aristotle avoids engaging with themes that could be seen as critiques of authority and imperialism, themes that would have been particularly sensitive during Alexander's expansive campaigns.

Instead, Aristotle focuses on "Oedipus King" by Sophocles, a tragedy that represents the life of a ruler willing to sacrifice himself for the good of his people. This play, with its emphasis on duty, responsibility, and the tragic flaws of a leader, aligns more comfortably with the ideals of the time. Oedipus's story, while tragic, ultimately upholds the notion of a ruler who prioritizes the welfare of his subjects, even at great personal cost. This portrayal supports the stability and legitimacy of political power, a narrative that supported Alexander's reign.

While *Poetics* employs a formalist approach to analyse the components of tragedy, this methodology does not preclude ideological considerations. Aristotle's choices reflect an underlying ideology that values social order and political stability. By emphasizing plays that align with these values and omitting those that challenge the status quo, Aristotle crafts a discourse that subtly reinforces the prevailing political power structures.

Aristotle admires "Oedipus Rex" for its structure, in which the sentences and sub-

conflicts are directly related to the main conflict of the play, and where the chorus represents a people respectful and compassionate of the fate of their King, like the ideal spectator that Eichendorff pointed out from the field of German philology in the 19th century:

> "The Chorus too should be regarded as one of the actors; it should be an integral part of the whole, and share in the action, in the manner not of Euripides but of Sophocles" (Poet., 18.)

Eichendorff argues that the chorus not only serves as a commentator on the development of the plot, but also as a representation of the ideal audience that empathizes and becomes emotionally involved with the fate of the characters, especially that of King Oedipus.

Aristotle also questions the use of the chorus as a singer of interludes—that is, of sentences or laments dissociated from the main action of the play:

> "their choral songs pertain as little to the subject of the piece as to that of any other tragedy" (Poet., 18.)

Aristotle does not question the originality of these songs, but rather their flimsy articulation to the main conflict of the play. Thematic repetition is encouraged, as well as the representation of the fate of a small number of ruling families:

> "the best tragedies are founded on the story of a few houses- on the fortunes of Alcmaeon, Oedipus, Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes, Telephus (Poet., 13.)"

Representation of Active and Passive Conflicts

Aristotle recommends the depiction of active conflicts in tragedy, as they are more effective in evoking fear and compassion in the audience. A prominent example of an active conflict is Oedipus's desire to discover the cause of the plague that besets Thebes in "Oedipus Rex." Determined to save his city, Oedipus pursues the truth with determination, even when the clues begin to indicate that he himself is the source of the curse. This active drive culminates in his decision to blind himself and go into exile, actions he chooses as a result of his discovery.

In contrast, passive conflicts are characterized by the lack of agency of the main characters, who must endure the decisions of others without being able to actively intervene in their fate. An example of this is found in Euripides' "The Trojan Women." In this play, the women of Troy, after the fall of their city, passively await the verdict of the victorious Argives on their fate, which will determine whether they will be sacrificed or enslaved. The crucial decisions are not in the hands of the protagonists but the conquerors.

Aristotle argues that active conflicts, where the main characters play a decisive and determining role in the development of the plot, are more likely to evoke the essential emotions of tragedy, such as fear and compassion. This is because the audience can empathize more deeply with characters who actively struggle against their circumstances than with those subject to the whims of external forces.

Like most commercial producers of our time, the philosopher rejects episodic or disjunctive tragedies. Several dramatic works lost or destroyed during the decline of the Greco-Roman civilization had already been condemned by the Poetics:

> "Of all plots and actions the episodic are the worst. I call a plot 'episodic' in which the episodes or acts succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence. Bad poets compose such pieces by their own fault, good poets, to please the players" (Poet., 9.)

This criticism is still relevant today, as seen in certain commercial films where scenes are strung together more for their individual impact than for their contribution to a cohesive story.

For instance, in *Jurassic Park* (1992), the sequence of events often serves to heighten suspense and deliver spectacular visuals rather than to develop a tightly woven plot. Similarly, in *Saving Private Ryan* (1997), the narrative is structured around intense and dramatic scenes that, while compelling, sometimes prioritize emotional impact over narrative coherence.

Both films show episodic conflicts that are imperfectly developed, and that Spielberg resolves by making use of the Euripidean miraculous conflict-ending resource: the Deus Ex Machina. In *Jurassic Park* the heroes are saved from the jaws of the velociraptors by the sudden appearance of a Tyrannosaurus rex, an intervention that, while thrilling, feels contrived. Similarly, in *Saving Private Ryan*, the timely arrival of Allied air support serves as a Deus ex machina, rescuing the protagonists from certain death. In both cases the antagonists are timely annihilated by a celestial intervention.

Deus ex machina, which translates to "god from the machine," refers to a plot device where an unsolvable problem is suddenly resolved by an unexpected and unlikely occurrence, often involving a divine intervention.

Euripides, one of the great tragedians of ancient Greece, frequently employed Deus ex machina in his plays. Here are a few notable examples:

Medea: At the end of the play, Medea escapes the consequences of her actions by being whisked away by a chariot sent by the sun god Helios. This divine intervention allows her to evade retribution, resolving the play's conflict abruptly and extrinsically.

Hippolytus: In this tragedy, the resolution comes when Artemis appears to explain the misunderstanding and tragedy that has befallen Hippolytus. This divine clarification resolves the play's central conflict, but it does so through external intervention (a demigod) rather than through the actions of the characters themselves.

Alcestis: The play concludes with Heracles wrestling with Death to bring Alcestis back to life. This miraculous intervention saves Alcestis and provides a happy ending, but again, it relies on a superhuman force stepping in to resolve the conflict.

Aristotle criticizes this device because it relies on an external force to resolve the conflict rather than deriving the resolution organically from the plot itself. By focusing on plots that develop logically and resolve through the actions of characters, Aristotle emphasizes the importance of a well-constructed narrative in evoking fear and

compassion. He believes that the resolution of a tragedy should arise from the interplay of character and plot, maintaining the internal logic and coherence of the narrative.

Brecht's reaction to Aristotelian apolitical approach

The reduction of art to entertainment drove Bertold Brecht to formulate an Epic Dramaturgy in opposition to an Aristotelian Dramaturgy. As a playwright, Brecht distinguished art from science[71] in order to recover for art the space it had lost before philosophy and science:

> "It is customary to see a rather unnatural knowledge in exceptional poets. They perceive with clear divine assertiveness what most men can only achieve through great industry and effort. It is clearly unpleasant —let's confess it, to realize that we hardly listen to the inspiration of the poets[72] ".

Aristotle, by focusing so much on the technicalities of dramatic work and its effectiveness in terms of entertainment, relegated his dialectic to the realm of philosophy, thereby relegating the function of art to a secondary role in the ethical and moral formation of the individual. In response to this stance, Brecht philosophically discusses as a playwright, demonstrating the need to restore the priority of dialectics in art.

Brecht argued that theatre should go beyond mere entertainment and serve as a tool for critical reflection and social change. For Brecht, art should not only imitate reality, as Aristotle advocated, but intervene in it, prompting the audience to question and transform their surroundings. The purpose of Brecht's *Kleines Organon für das Theater* was to challenge the Aristotelian idea that art should be an imitation of reality to provide emotional catharsis.

Instead of creating an illusion of reality, Brecht advocated for a theatre that made the audience aware they were watching a representation, using the "distancing effect" or *Verfremdungseffekt*. This method aimed to prevent the audience from emotionally identifying with the characters in the play and instead encouraged them to critically reflect on the themes presented.

Brecht argued that theatre should provide a space for analysis and criticism rather than mere emotional absorption. This perspective opposes the Aristotelian notion that tragedy should merely provoke catharsis, an emotional purification through fear and compassion. In his work *Kleines Organon für das Theater*, Brecht asserts that:

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71 "Kunst und Wissenschaft wirken in sehr verschiedener Weise, abgemacht" 'Das epische Theater', in Schriften zum Theater 3: über eine nicht-aristotelische Dramatik (Frankfurt: Suhrkampf, 1963), p. 58. And later on, towards the end of his life: "Die materialistisch-dialektische Betrachtungsweise mu®, da wir uns im Bereich der Kunst aufhalten, zu Bewubtsein gebracht und zu einem Vergnügen gemacht werden" Brecht, Bertold, Eigenarten des Berliner Ensembles, in Brechts Theaterarbeit: seine Inszenierung des 'Kaukasischen Kreidekreises' (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1954), p. 15.

72 "Sie sind es gewohnt, in Dichtern einzigartige, ziemlich unnatürlich Wesen zu sehen, die mit wahrhaft göttlicher Sicherheit Dinge erkennen, welche andere nur mit großer Mühe und viel Fleiß erkennen können. Es ist natürlich unangenehm, zugeben zu müssen, daß man nicht zu diesen Begnadeten gehört" Brecht, Op. cit., 1963, p. 58.

> "The theatre must engage with reality in order to create effective images of the reality it is obliged to represent[73]."

This idea relates to Kierkegaard's studies on ethics and aesthetics, who prescribed in *Fear and Trembling*[74], in relation to Abraham's sacrifice, that ethics is always shaped by aesthetics in each society. "Art is not merely a mirror, but the hammer with which society is shaped," is an attribution to Brecht that aligns with Kierkegaardian dialectics.

Mitry's organic and imposed symbols

In the same vein, the aesthetics of disjunctive or reiterative films such as *Un Chien Andalou* (Buñuel & Dalí, 1927), *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* (Resnais, 1962) o *Citizen Kane* (Welles, 1942) prompted professor Jean Mitry to psychoanalyse cinema, emphasizing the distinction between cinematic and anticinematic symbolism. In his view, the effectiveness of a symbol in film is contingent on its integration within the visual context, rather than being a pre-existing literary or conceptual idea imposed onto the film.

Mitry highlights the difference between symbols that emerge organically from the visual context of a film and those that are imposed upon it. He uses Un Chien Andalou as a primary example, dissecting its symbolic content to illustrate his point:

> "The visualization of ready-made symbols having signification independent of their visual context is anticinematic because it is not a function of film language. Take, for example, Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou*, a symbolic film par excellence. The eye being cut by a razor after a cloud has passed over the sun cutting it in two is a contingent symbol: the meaning it gives to the action is the consequence of an image relationship produced by the action itself[75]."

This example of the razor cutting the eye demonstrates how a symbol can gain meaning from the immediate visual context, creating a powerful and visceral image that is inherently cinematic. The relationship between the cloud passing over the sun and the razor cutting the eye is created by the film itself, drawing its significance from the visual sequence and the associative power of the images.

Mitry contrasts this with symbols that he deems anticinematic, such as the piano with donkeys being dragged along by priests in *Un Chien Andalou:*

> "On the other hand, the symbol of the piano with the donkeys being dragged along by the priests is a manufactured symbol. I do not mean that it has not been created in view of the film—indeed, it exists only for the film, but not by the film. It

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73 "Das Theater muf sich in der Wirklichkeit engagieren, um wirkungsvolle Abbilder der Wirklichkeit herstellen zu können und zu dürfen." Brecht, B. (1971). Kleines Organon für das Theater. En W. Hecht (Ed.), Über Politik auf dem Theater (pp. 59). Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

74 Kierkegaard, S. (1985). Fear and Trembling (A. Hannay, Trans.). Penguin Classics.

75 Mitry, J. (1997). The Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema (C. King, Trans.). Indiana University Press. (Original work published 1963)., p. 180.

is not some 'cliché stuck onto life,' for at least it has the merit of being original. But it is incomprehensible—precisely because it does not have a basis in expression. It is the visualization of a literary concept (and how!), a filmed concept not a film concept. It is previous to the visual expression[76]."

Mitry criticizes this kind of symbolism for lacking a natural basis within the film's visual and narrative structure. These symbols, while original, do not emerge organically from the cinematic language but are instead imposed upon it. They are derived from pre-existing literary or conceptual ideas (episodic), making them less effective within the film medium because they do not resonate as effectively with the audience through the visual experience.

Mitry's distinction between contingent and manufactured symbols has significant implications for film analysis. It suggests that truly cinematic symbols are those that derive their meaning from the film's visual and narrative context. These symbols are created by the film and for the film, enhancing the viewer's experience by integrating seamlessly into the cinematic language.

This perspective can be applied to other films that employ complex symbolism. For example, in *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*, the repetitive and ambiguous scenes create symbols that emerge from the film's exploration of memory and perception. These symbols are effective because they arise naturally from the film's structure and thematic content.

Similarly, *Citizen Kane* employs a non-linear narrative that constructs its symbols through the fragmented recounting of Kane's life. The symbol of "Rosebud" gains its meaning from the visual and narrative context of the film, rather than being a pre-imposed literary concept.

Poetics of the Image-Action

Poetics defines plot as the soul of drama, a statement that suits the commercial demands of mainstream filmmaking today. And though drama could exist with plot alone, no film is eventually done without paying due homage to celebrities, songs and music. Aristotle understands plot as a complete action (praxis):

> "for Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of an action and of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality " (Poet., 6.)

The poet is a contriver of actions, in conformity with Aristotle's theories on physics (197b4,) politics (1325a32,) and ethics (1098a16, b21.) Happiness and unhappiness happened in actions regulated by opposed forces: true and secrecy, life and death, revenge or forgiveness.

Gilles Deleuze echoes Aristotle while describing American Cinema:

76 Ibidem.

> "Action is by itself a strife of forces, a series of strives: strife against the system (*milieu,)* against the others, against itself… [The movement action (*l'image-action)*] stretches out before the system and shrinks in before the action[77]."

Conventional cinema represents characters who can only live and feel through violent actions. For example, in *The Godfather* (1972), the main character achieves power by killing his opponents, and in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), a cowboy expresses his friendship by shooting a troublemaker in the back. Actions become physical actions. Violence, rarely represented during the decline of Greek tragedy, became the norm of commercial cinema. Models and actors perform acrobatic chases and escapes to satisfy their psychological needs. The morbidity of film producers, rather than the aesthetic demands of the spectators, regulates filmmaking today. *Poetics* describes the dramatic elements of contemporary cinema. It also analyses the role of subplots, changes of fortune, music, makeup, and special effects. However, by emphasizing entertainment, Aristotle sanctioned poetry in accordance with the economic and political imperatives of his time.

The Word-Image and the Time-Image

While Deleuze's concept of the action-image highlights the predominance of physical conflict and resolution in cinema, the introduction of the word-image offers a different perspective. The word-image emphasizes the use of dialogue and verbal expression as primary tools for character interaction and conflict resolution. This approach contrasts with the action-image by prioritizing communication over physical action.

A notable example of the word-image in cinema is *12 Angry Men* (1957), directed by Sidney Lumet. The film, adapted from Reginald Rose's teleplay, takes place almost entirely in a jury deliberation room. The conflict is resolved not through physical action but through intense dialogue and verbal persuasion. The jurors debate the guilt or innocence of a defendant, and their arguments and discussions drive the narrative. This film demonstrates how words can create dramatic tension and lead to a resolution without resorting to physical conflict.

Similarly, *A Few Good Men* (1992), adapted from Aaron Sorkin's play, relies heavily on courtroom drama and verbal exchanges. The climax of the film is the famous cross-examination scene, where the truth is revealed through strategic questioning and powerful dialogue. The resolution comes from the characters' verbal confrontations and moral reckonings, rather than from any physical action.

Deleuze's concept of the time-image further expands the cinematic language by focusing on the subjective experience of time and memory. In contrast to the action-image, which is rooted in physical actions and events, the time-image explores the inner workings of the human mind, reflecting on memory, perception, and the passage of time. Films like *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* and *Mirror* (1975) by Andrei Tarkovsky exemplify

77 Deleuze, Gilles (1982). L'Image-Mouvement, Cinema 1. Gallimard., p. 197.

the time-image, presenting narratives that are non-linear and fragmented, much like human memory.

This rejection of violence in favour of dialogue and negotiation is a hallmark of civilized societies. Films that emphasize the word-image and the time-image reflect this human capability, offering narratives that delve into the complexities of human interaction and the subjective experience of time.

In the next chapter, I will explain how we have effectively utilized these images through semiotics, as our mind receives and processes information from three main types of signs: the icon (the action-image), the index (the time-image), and the symbol (the word-image).

11. Film and semiotics

Of the many signs formulated by C. Peirce, there are three that have generated significant interest among linguists and semioticians:

The icon,
The index,
The symbol.

In fact, all signs can be understood as a variation or combination of these. Although most scholars have shown an admirable understanding of the triad, I have not found a clear definition of these terms in the field of cinema. My intention is not to contend against previous semiotic categorizations but to analyse the uses of semiotics in cinematography to effectively contribute to the arts of scriptwriting and film directing.

The Icon

The icon is the image. It is a visual sign that represents an object or reality directly and literally. The icon triggers its immediate interpretation in a given space, without the need for a complex decoding process. The importance that Aristotle gives to the eye in his *Metaphysics* (980_21) corresponds to the prevalent nature of the icon:

> "All humans by nature desire to know. A sign of this is our fondness for sensory capabilities. For besides their utility, these objects are liked for themselves, and especially by their eyes. For not only to perform an action but even when we are not going to do anything at all, we choose sight over (almost, one might say) all the others. The reason for this is that of all the sensory capabilities it is the one that allows us to know most fully and clarifies many differences[78]."

Healthy humans see the world and understand reality through icons. The popularity of cinema, particularly Hollywood cinema, is a consequence of its iconic nature. Viewers see what they see, without the need for further interpretation. This ability to present information directly is what makes icons so powerful and effective in visual communication.

The language of icons is the language of the eye. The primary and one-dimensional nature of the icon also explains its universality. An icon comes into existence as soon as any human perceives it. Thus, the icon of a knife recreates the icon of a knife, and the icon of a smiling woman is interpreted as a smiling woman.

The icon is a denotation that refers to its primary meaning, that is, the literal or

78 Aristotle. (2016). Metaphysics (C. D. C. Reeve, Trans.)., p. 2

direct meaning presented immediately and explicitly. Thus, the icon of an object that a man has never seen before denotes a man never seen before. This ability of icons to denote themselves, that is, to be understood immediately and universally, is what makes them so effective in visual communication.

The reason why so many religions are reluctant towards religious icons is based on the immediacy with which believers apprehend their gods. The essence of all divinities is the supreme good or love, not a mass of concrete or wood, or a canvas representing the being that that supreme good or love has embodied.

Islam, from its beginnings, has prohibited the figurative representation of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. This prohibition, known as aniconism, arises from the fear that the faithful might confuse the image with the divinity itself, thus falling into idolatry. The Quran does not explicitly mention this prohibition, but the hadiths (sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad) emphasize that only God can create life and, therefore, humans should not attempt to imitate Him through images[79]. The struggle of Muslims against icons has been a central element in their effort to maintain the purity of Islamic monotheism.

In Judaism, the visual representation of God is strictly prohibited, following the second commandment that forbids the creation of idols. This prohibition also extended to the representation of human and animal figures in the synagogue for much of Jewish history. However, Christianity, from its early days, adopted the use of images and symbols to represent Christ and other saints. This practice led to conflicts, particularly in contexts where Jews and early Christians coexisted closely, as Jews saw the veneration of images as a form of idolatry.

The iconoclastic crisis in the Byzantine Empire (8th and 9th centuries) was an intense struggle between iconoclasts, who advocated the destruction of religious images, and iconodules, who defended their use[80].. The iconoclasts argued that the veneration of icons led to idolatry, diverting the devotion of the faithful from the invisible God to visible images. On the other hand, the iconodules argued that icons were important for the instruction and devotion of the faithful, asserting that the images were not worshiped in themselves, but served as means to elevate the mind towards the divine.

During the Protestant Reformation, one of the most vehement criticisms of reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin was against the veneration of images and saints in the Catholic Church. Protestants rejected the practice of venerating the Virgin Mary and other saints, seeing these practices as a form of idolatry that diverted believers from direct worship of God. The destruction of images and statues in Catholic churches was a manifestation of this Protestant iconoclasm, which sought to purify the Christian faith from what they considered corrupt practices.

Despite these struggles, Christian theology has developed a sophisticated understanding of the use of icons. Orthodox theology, for example, distinguishes

79 Cfr. Grabar, O. (1981). The Formation of Islamic Art. Yale University Press.

80 Cfr. Flannery-Dailey, F. (1996). Iconoclasm. En Encyclopedia of Religion (2nd ed., Vol. 7, pp. 4263-4265). Macmillan Reference USA.

between worship (latria), which is due only to God, and veneration (dulia), which can be directed to saints and their images. According to this perspective, icons are not worshiped in themselves, but serve as windows to the divine, helping the faithful to focus their devotion and meditate on the mysteries of faith. This distinction is crucial to understanding how icons can be used without falling into idolatry.

The misunderstanding between religions regarding the use of icons often stems from the ease with which the faithful can confuse what an image of God denotes with what an icon connotes. A true believer, according to theology, does not worship the image itself but what the image represents. However, this distinction can be subtle and difficult to maintain, especially for the uninitiated. Education and catechesis are essential to help the faithful understand the proper role of icons in their religious life[81].

Denotation and Connotation

Denotation is the first level of meaning, the most basic and direct. Additional interpretations evade the iconic nature of the sign, as any connotation, that is, any late or secondary interpretation, derives from an independent sign or symbol. In other words, the same icon can have multiple layers of meaning, depending on who interprets it and in what context it is presented.

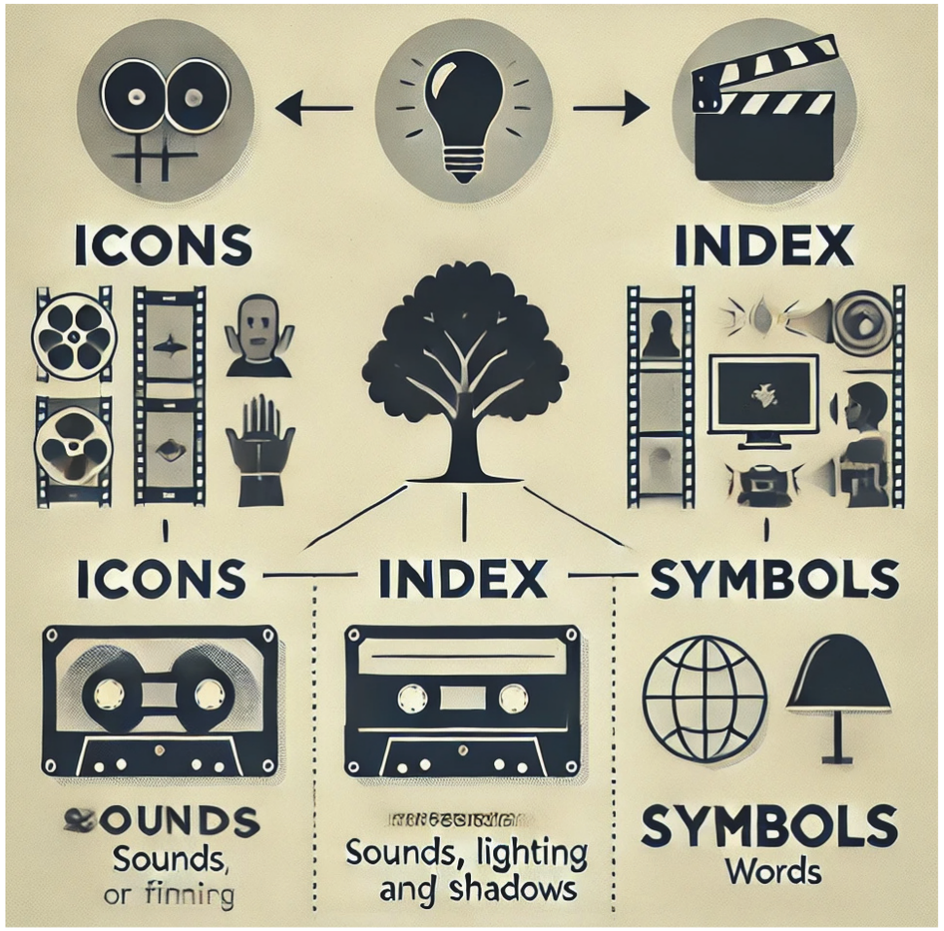
The further symbolism of an icon, its connotations, will always be subject to its context and cultural interpretation. Connotation refers to the additional, cultural, or emotional meanings that are associated with the icon beyond its literal meaning. These additional meanings can vary according to the cultural context and the individual experiences of the viewer. For example, the icon of a cow is also a symbol of a Sunday lunch for an Englishman and of an incarnate god for a Hindu from Calcutta.

The Wars of the Roses (1455-1487) was a series of civil conflicts in England between the houses of Lancaster and York, who fought for the English throne. The name of the conflict comes from the heraldic emblems of the two houses: a red rose for the Lancasters and a white rose for the Yorks. In this context, the rose ceased to be simply a flower to become a political symbol, an emblem of the rival factions fighting for power. This use of the rose as a symbol shows how an icon can acquire complex connotations that go beyond its literal meaning.

In Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980), the rose becomes a multifaceted symbol. The story, set in a Benedictine abbey in the 14th century, centres on the investigation of a series of mysterious deaths. At the end of the novel, Eco includes the Latin phrase "Stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus" (The ancient rose remains in its name, we hold the naked names). This line highlights the idea that symbols (like the rose) can lose their original meaning and remain only as names. The title of the novel and its use of the rose as a symbol allude to the transience of things and the permanence of concepts, similar to "Rosebud" in *Citizen Kane* by Orson Welles, where "Rosebud" represents for all moviegoers the nostalgia for the protagonist's lost childhood.

81 Wood, J. W. (2002). Icons and Idols: The Use of Sacred Images in Christianity. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

The popularity of cinema, especially Hollywood cinema, is largely due to the iconic nature of the images projected on a screen. Movies use icons to tell stories in a visual and direct way, allowing viewers to understand and enjoy the narratives without the need for complex interpretation. Filmmakers use icons to evoke emotions and convey messages effectively, taking advantage of humans' innate ability to interpret images.



A classic example is the use of the image of Marilyn Monroe. The image of Monroe is an icon that denotes the famous actress and sex symbol of the 1950s and 1960s. However, her connotations go beyond her personal identity. For many people, her image connotes glamour, sensuality, and the peak of Hollywood in the golden age of cinema. In *Buena Vista Social Club* by Wim Wenders (1999), the smile of a woman is simply a smile, without the cultural connotations associated with Marilyn Monroe, whom three Cuban

singers cannot appreciate as the symbol she still is today in the capitalist world, due to the strict control that Castro's tyranny exerts over the Cuban people, depriving them of most of Hollywood's culture.

The ability of icons to denote meanings immediately and universally is one of the reasons why they are so effective in visual communication. However, their connotations can vary widely depending on the cultural context and individual interpretation, adding layers of meaning that enrich the viewers' experience.

The icon is a powerful tool in visual communication due to its ability to be understood immediately and universally. Its use in film and other forms of visual art allows creators to convey meaning directly and effectively, taking advantage of the innate nature of human beings to interpret images. On the other hand, indices and symbols are mediated by culture, arts and science.

The index

An index is a non-iconic sign. Although most indices are sounds, some visual effects and shadows should also be included in this category. Smells and tactile sensations are also indices. Although cinema has rarely used sensations and smells, I can see them becoming part of the cinematic experience in the near future with the growing popularity of 3D theatres.

Thunder is an index of a storm; a fever is an index of infection; smoke is an index of fire. Our minds instantly capture and read indices due to our innate ability to correlate cause and effect. They do not have a virtual existence in the mind of the interpreter, as Plato might argue. They are understood as elements of their own category, that is, as non-iconic signs.

The reading of indices depends on the particular knowledge and/or experience of the interpreter. Animals and small children, for example, are incapable of correlating thunder with the sound of subsequent rain. Since it is the principle of causality that determines our daily perceptions, indices are subject to misinterpretations, as we demonstrated in the chapter on cinema and perception.

Ivan Pavlov's behaviourist experiments are a classic example of how indices function in associative learning. Pavlov, a Russian physiologist, conducted a series of experiments showing that dogs could learn to associate a neutral stimulus (such as the sound of a bell) with a significant stimulus (such as food). This process is known as classical conditioning.

In his experiments, Pavlov would ring a bell just before feeding the dogs. After repeating this sequence several times, the dogs began to salivate upon hearing the bell, even when no food was presented. In this context, the sound of the bell becomes an index that the dog associates with the arrival of food.

The index is a type of sign that has a causal or physical relationship with the object it represents. In Pavlov's experiment, the sound of the bell (the index) is physically associated with the arrival of food (the object). The dog's mind establishes a causal connection between the index and the object, which triggers an anticipatory response (salivation).

Pavlov explained this phenomenon according to the principle of a priori causality:

"It is about regular causal connections between certain defined external stimuli acting on the organism and its accessory reflex reactions[82]." (Pavlov, 1927).

The learning Pavlov describes is essentially a process of association between a conditioned stimulus (the sound of the bell) and an unconditioned stimulus (the food). This type of learning has broad implications not only for animal psychology but also for understanding human behaviour and learning processes.

Pavlov's work shows how indices can be used to modify behaviour through learned associations. This idea is fundamental in many practical applications, from animal training to human behaviour modification in therapeutic contexts.

Indices are crucial in learning because they allow individuals to anticipate and prepare for future events based on past experiences. This type of learning is adaptive because it helps organisms respond more effectively to their environment.

Besides its importance in behaviourist psychology, the concept of indices has been effectively adapted in the world of advertising. Advertisers often use classical conditioning techniques to associate their products with desirable emotions and experiences.

Advertising employs principles of classical conditioning to influence consumer behaviour. Here are some prominent examples:

1. **Chanel No. 5:**
    - Index: Chanel No. 5 perfume.
    - Condition: Advertising showing attractive and glamorous people.
    - Reward: Admiration, attractiveness, and social success.
    - Underlying Message: Wearing Chanel No. 5 will make you more attractive and successful.
2. **Rolex:**
    - Index: Rolex watch.
    - Condition: Advertising showing successful and powerful people.
    - Reward: Success, status, and prestige.
    - Underlying Message: Wearing a Rolex is a symbol of achievement and prestige.

In these examples, advertisers use indices to create positive associations in the consumer's mind. Just as in Pavlov's experiments, where dogs learned to associate the bell with food, consumers learn to associate certain products with desirable emotions and experiences. This conditioning is powerful because it exploits humans' innate ability to form causal associations and anticipate rewards.

Deictic conditioning is not limited to consumers who can afford luxury products

82 Pavlov, I. P. (1927). Conditioned Reflexes: An Investigation of the Physiological Activity of the Cerebral Cortex. (G. V. Anrep, Trans.). New York: Dover., p. 16.

like Chanel No. 5 or Rolex. In fact, its greatest effectiveness lies in its ability to influence the perception of masses who may never buy these products. This group, while not the immediate buyer, is crucial for maintaining and reinforcing the brand's image.

The glamour and status associated with luxury products are culturally transmitted, becoming aspirational symbols. Even those who cannot acquire a Rolex or Chanel No. 5 learn to associate these brands with success and attractiveness, connotations that affect their general perception and aspirational behaviour.

Popular brands like Coca-Cola have also used deictic conditioning techniques to associate their product with desirable emotions and experiences. A notable example is the famous Coca-Cola "Hilltop" ad from 1971, where people from different cultures gather to sing about peace and harmony, holding bottles of Coca-Cola. This ad not only sells a drink but associates the act of drinking Coca-Cola with global unity and happiness.

1. **Coca-Cola:**
    - Index: Bottle of Coca-Cola.
    - Condition: Advertising showing happy and united people, often in festive or family situations.
    - Reward: Happiness, unity, and special moments.
    - Underlying Message: Drinking Coca-Cola will make you feel happy and connected with others.

This type of advertising uses classical conditioning to create a strong association between the product and positive emotions. While most viewers cannot experience the glamorous life associated with luxury brands, everyone can afford a bottle of Coca-Cola, making the promise of happiness and connection accessible and attractive to a mass audience.

Chaplin, Author of the First Memorable Index

Gilles Deleuze, in his studies on cinema, explores the use of the index as a powerful tool in creating meanings and emotions in cinematic narrative. In his analysis of the film *A Woman of Paris* (1923) by Charlie Chaplin, Deleuze highlights a particular sequence where the protagonist bids farewell to her lover at a train station. In this scene, the train is not shown directly; instead, its presence is suggested through shadows that act as indices.

Although Deleuze uses the term "index" to describe this scene, his analysis does not perceive its potential for contrast with the icon of cinematic narrative, preferring to subordinate it to the icon as "the small form" of the action-image: "The composition sign of this new action-image is the index."

The moving train shadows certainly indicate the departure of the train and the lovers' separation, creating a sense of absence and loss that is more powerful precisely because it is not shown iconically:

"Likewise, the faces [in *A Woman of Paris* (1931)] did not only have an

autonomous expressive or affective value, but they also did not simply offer an indication of what extended off-screen: they really functioned as indices of a global situation. Hence the famous image of the train whose arrival is only seen in the passing lights on the woman's face[83]." (Deleuze, 1983, p. 228).

Deleuze did not perceive the independent and autonomous value of the index, preferring to refer to an "off-screen" icon, which in this case would be the train. In this Chaplin film, it is not the eye that perceives the object directly, but the shadows that act as indices of another image, in this case, the train. The distinction is sharper when it comes to other senses that refer to the icon. For example, consider the car explosion at the beginning of Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil* (1958). This sequence is a famous example of Welles' innovative use of deictic (sound and visual) narration to create suspense and foreshadow the chaotic events that follow. Charlton Heston stars as Ramón Miguel "Mike" Vargas.

Instead of showing us the direct explosion of a 1956 Ford Customline, we hear a deafening detonation, see Charlton Heston's face, and finally, the image of burning scrap, which we relate to the primary icon of a package with a clock left in the car in the film's first shot. The saving of that car, which any other Hollywood director would have squandered, led Heston to protest when several of Welles' enemies, jealous of his return to Hollywood with this thriller, claimed that if there was a film director who demonstrated concern for filming within the originally assigned budget, it was Orson Welles.

Heston's praise exposed the shameless practices of his previous directors, like William Wyler of *Ben-Hur* (1959), who directed through icons, unable to resort to indices to reduce production costs.

Iconic thirst inspires several modern Hollywood directors like Christopher Nolan, known for his meticulous and often extravagant use of practical effects, including the destruction of several vehicles in his films. Some notable examples include:

- **The Dark Knight** (2008): Nolan's film featured the destruction of several vehicles, including the famous Tumbler (a military-grade Batmobile) and several police cars. One of the most memorable scenes involved flipping a truck in a dramatic chase sequence.
- **The Dark Knight Rises** (2012): This film saw the destruction of additional Tumblers and a large-scale battle scene in Gotham City involving numerous police and civilian vehicles.
- **Inception** (2010): The film included a memorable chase scene in Mombasa where several cars were involved in crashes and chases, culminating in a van falling into water during one of the dream levels.
- **Tenet** (2020): Known for its complex action scenes, Tenet featured a high-speed car chase involving several cars, some shown crashing and flipping, often in

83 Deleuze, Gilles (1983). La Imagen-Movimiento. Paidos., p. 227.

reverse, to match the film's unique time inversion premise.

The total amount of money Nolan has delighted the world with amounts to roughly $23.5 million, according to ChatGPT's calculations. How many charitable works could have been achieved with films directed by a resourceful director like Chaplin or Welles!

While the eye is the only organ through which icons are perceived, indices are primarily captured by the senses of hearing, touch, and smell. Blind men recreate the world through indices. They can, for example, notice the presence of an annoying companion by the sound of his voice or the existence of debris by a smell. They can also identify a metal object by its temperature and texture.

The Symbol

Language, which is a complex of symbols, is seen as a fundamental tool that connects thought with action. According to Shaivism, the word is not just a means of communication, but a creative power that can shape reality. This is reflected in the concept of Mantra, which are sacred words or phrases repeated to invoke divine energy and achieve internal and external changes.

A symbol is a sign that triggers a cultural interpretation. All words, in fact, are symbols, as they emerged from a given culture and are expected to be understood by interpreters familiar with that culture.

Like indices, symbols are open to misinterpretations, as the value a symbol acquires in a given culture is arbitrary and constantly subject to change. Moreover, a symbol can trigger multiple meanings: the word "bitch," for example, refers to a female dog but also to a capricious woman.

At this point, we can understand the main difference between semiotics and semiology. While semiotics refers to signs in general, semiology studies the most artificial of all signs: the symbol. Ferdinand de Saussure, who keenly understood the complexity of symbols, anticipated the existence of semiotics in his *Cours de linguistique générale*[84].

Saussure also established the duality of the symbol and understood it as a sign with a signifier and a signified. Thus, the word *chien* is a signifier, an arbitrary combination of letters whose meaning becomes accessible only to French speakers (dog). Saussure firmly believed that a signifier was inseparable from its signified. Although such a statement remains virtually undisputed, it is obvious that a symbol consists of one signifier and one or several signifieds. Many linguists and semiologists have elaborated intricate theories to reconcile this obvious fact with Saussure's writings.

Bitch can have the two mentioned meanings but can also be interpreted as an insult. The richness or poverty of the symbol, that is, its potentiality of meaning, will depend on the interpreter's knowledge, culture, and experience. For example, the word "simple" today might be understood exclusively by a young person as a symbol of decadence. In contrast, a reader more familiar with Elizabethan literature will read it as a symbol of strength.

84 Saussure, F. de (1916). Cours de linguistique générale. Paris: Payot.

In one of his letters, Gramsci left a surprising example of the exclusive nature of a symbol. His aunt, Grazia, used to praise a woman named "donna Bisodia." She told Gramsci that she was so important that she was always mentioned at mass. It turned out that his aunt was misinterpreting the Latin phrase *dona nobis hodie* ("give us today...") as "donna Bisodia[85]."

Communication is a delicate process, often hindered by the fragile nature of symbols. The film industry has struggled to produce movies within accessible symbolic systems. Dubbing and subtitles are necessary to convey the meaning and expression of local films to audiences worldwide.

Julia Kristeva, another influential semiologist, criticized Saussure's signifier/signified dyad, arguing that meanings are in constant flux and transformation within an "intertextual space[86]." For Kristeva, symbols not only convey fixed meanings but are also subject to multiple interpretations and recontextualizations, depending on their interaction with other texts and cultural signs.

Cinema has its own language inherited from 25 centuries of dramaturgy: the word as a symbol. Despite technical purists insisting on reducing cinema to icons, words play a crucial role in its daily execution. In his play *Henry V*, Shakespeare uses language to describe the Battle of Agincourt so vividly that the audience can imagine the scene without elaborate special effects. In the famous Saint Crispin's Day speech (Act 4, Scene 3), King Henry V inspires his soldiers by speaking of the honour and glory they will win in battle:

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

This use of language not only evokes the image of the battle but also creates an emotional connection and a sense of camaraderie between the characters and the audience. This power of words to convey images and emotions is essential in cinema, where dialogues and monologues can save costs by avoiding the need for expensive visual effects.

In *Persona* (1966) by Ingmar Bergman, there is a scene where the protagonist, Alma (played by Bibi Andersson), recounts a sexual experience in detail. The symbols evoked

85 Davidson, A. (1977). Antonio Gramsci: Towards an intellectual biography. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press. (p. 32)

86 Kristeva, Julia. Revolution in Poetic Language. Trans. Margaret Waller. Columbia University Press, 1984.

are vividly represented with words to the viewer, who is imperceptibly led to a sexual scene with an intensity that pornographic films have never achieved:

"I have a deep affection for Karl-Henrik, but I've only loved once. I'm committed to him. As for opportunities in my profession, I know they're there. Karl-Henrik and I rented a cottage by the sea once. It was in June, and we were alone. He went into town one day, and I spent the day at the beach by myself. The sun was warm and nice. There was another girl there, Katarina, who had come from another island because our beach was sunnier and more secluded. We lay there naked, sunbathing and dozing off and on, reapplying sunscreen. We wore silly hats with blue ribbons. Mine had a blue ribbon.

I gazed out at the landscape, the sea, and the sun. It was almost funny. Suddenly I saw two figures on the rocks above us. They would peek out occasionally. "Two boys are watching us," I said to Katarina. "Let them watch," she replied, and turned over onto her back. I felt a strange sensation. I wanted to jump up and put my suit back on, but I just lay there on my stomach with my bottom exposed, completely calm.

And Katarina was next to me, with her breasts and thighs exposed, giggling. I noticed that the boys were getting closer. They just stood there looking at us. I noticed they were very young. The boldest one approached us and squatted down next to Katarina. He pretended to be busy picking his toes. I felt strange. Suddenly Katarina said to him, "Hey, you, why don't you come here?"

Then she took his hand and helped him take off his jeans and shirt. Suddenly he was on top of her. She guided him in and held his buttocks. The other boy just sat and watched. I heard Katarina whispering in his ear and laughing. His face was red and swollen. Suddenly I turned around and said, "Aren't you coming to me too?" And Katarina said, "Go to her now."

He pulled out of her and then fell on top of me, completely hard. He grabbed my breast, which hurt so much! I was overwhelmed and came almost immediately. Can you believe it? I wanted to tell him to be careful not to make me pregnant when he came. I felt something I'd never felt before – how his sperm was shooting inside me.

He held my shoulders and bent backward. I came over and over again. Katarina lay there watching and held him from behind. After he came, she took him in her arms and used his hand to make herself come. When she came, she screamed like a banshee. The three of us started laughing.

We called out to the other boy, Peter, who was sitting on the slope. He seemed confused and shivering in the sunshine. Katarina unbuttoned his pants and started playing with him. And when he came, she took him in her mouth. He bent down and kissed her back. She turned around, took his head in both hands, and gave him her breast. The other boy got so excited that he and I started all over again. It was just as nice as before.

Then we had a swim and went our separate ways. When I got home, Karl-Henrik was already back from town. We had dinner and some red wine. Then we

had sex. It had never been that good before or after. Can you understand that? And I got pregnant naturally. Karl-Henrik took me to a doctor who performed an abortion because we didn't want children at that time. It doesn't make sense.

None of it fits together... You feel guilty for little things... Can you understand that? And what happens to everything you make up your mind to do? Is it necessary to do it all? Is it possible to be one person at the same time? I mean two people? Oh Lord, it's so silly...

The monologue has been the subject of study and analysis in the field of psychology and neuroscience, demonstrating that words can evoke physiological and emotional responses in listeners. A study published in 2012 in the journal Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience found that men who listened to the monologue without being shown explicit images experienced a significantly greater sexual response than those who did not listen. The monologue has been described as "a classic example of how language can be used to create a sexually erotic and stimulating experience without showing explicit images[87]"."

In the film adaptation of *Death of a Salesman* (1985), directed by Volker Schlöndorff and starring Dustin Hoffman, there is a monologue at the end of the film that describes the death of the main character, Willy Loman. This monologue, performed by Charles Durning, has a profound emotional impact without needing to show the death directly. Instead of a visual representation, the words convey the character's tragedy and despair:

"You don't understand: Willy was a salesman. And for a salesman, there is no rock bottom in life. He doesn't put a bolt to a nut, he doesn't tell you the law or give you medicine. He's a man way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoeshine. And when they start not smiling back, that's an earthquake. And then you get a couple of spots on your hat, and you're finished. Don't blame this man. A salesman has got to dream, boy. It comes with the territory."

The use of words as symbols in cinema effectively replaces costly visual representations, achieving an emotional impact equal to or even greater than that of visual imagery. Words have the power to trigger mental images and intense emotions, making cinema an auditory as well as a visual experience.

Dialogues can also be used to save production costs. Instead of showing a spectacular helicopter explosion, a director might opt for a character to say: "And the helicopter exploded." This not only reduces costs but can be equally effective in advancing the plot and maintaining the viewer's attention. Examples of this can be found in many films where verbal narrative substitutes for the direct visualization of events, creating an equally impactful but more economical experience.

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87 Lieberman, Matthew D., et al. "The Neural Correlates of Subjective Sexual Arousal: An fMRI Study." Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, vol. 7, no. 2, 2012, pp. 120-129. doi:10.1093/scan/nsr062.

Uses of the Icon, the Index, and the Symbol

In general, cinema is composed of images. The era of the silent screen was also the golden age of iconography. Filmmakers and actors could not use their voices. Thinking then became an activity exclusive to the eye. Editing was a puzzle solved by gestures and body movements.

The use of symbols, that is, printed words and intertitles, was sparse. Writers and filmmakers were judged by their conciseness.

"Show, don't tell," became the undisputed rule, and Germany's most renowned filmmaker achieved the perfect film of the era in a loose adaptation of the 20th-century Book of Job: *The Last Laugh* (1924) by Murnau, the drama of an elderly hotel porter who is fired for making an exhausted error by unloading a heavy trunk, leading to the loss of his social status and that of his family.

Murnau's film is still remembered as the first silent feature film edited without intertitles, although the camera focuses on several titles on the walls.

The actors of the mime era, or the silver age of cinema, became silent stars, bringing the universal language of the deaf to all humanity. Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks became symbols of an era, soon forgotten.

Only Chaplin and Keaton have stood the test of time. An industrious study of end-of-century semiotics can still establish the tremendous contribution of silent film stars to modern communication.

Almost simultaneously with the rise of cinema was the popularity of radio, the primary medium of acoustic signs.

In 1928, sound was synchronized with film at 24 frames per second, and radio semiotics quickly integrated into film grammar. The "talkies" took over theatres, and the silent film industry suffered a sudden death.

The Word-Action

All acoustic effects are indexes, as they refer us to an invisible world. We hear raindrops, and without seeing them, we feel the proximity of rain. We hear an off-screen voice that turns out to be recorded, as in *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1933) by Lang, or we hear the news sequence at the beginning of *Citizen Kane* as a map of the film that follows.

Sometimes the index is merely visual, as in the cited Chaplin scene, or as in the flickering shadows of war explosions in *Napoleon* (1927) by Abel Gance.

Symbols and indices are the resources of ingenious cinema. Filmmakers who rely on symbols face a double challenge. On one hand, they trust their acting talent; the meaning is entrusted to their particular interpretations. The expression of clear ideas (rhetoric) becomes as important as the texture of their voices (diction) and the versatility and transparency of their looks, gestures, and behaviours (versatility).

As action is the element of drama, their speeches must be rich in what Pirandello calls Spoken Action (L'azione parlata):

"The living word that moves, the immediate, natural expression of action,

the only phrase that cannot but be attributed to a particular character in the given situation. Words, phrases, and sentences that are not invented, but arise when an author truly associates them with their creation... [88]"

The use of symbols in cinema can be perceived in films like *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), *Amadeus* (1984), or *Doubt* (2008). These films employ symbols to convey complex messages and emotions, often using artistic and decorative objects in the setting.

Directors like Fassbinder, Dreyer, Bertolucci, and Bergman are also known for their use of symbols, preferring the depth of symbolic meaning over mere iconic representation.

As another example, consider Marlon Brando's desolate monologue in *Last Tango in Paris* (Bertolucci, 1972), or the sharp comments of the neighbours in *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul* (Fassbinder, 1974), and the already mentioned cinematic confessions of Bibi Anderson in Bergman's *Persona* (1966), examples of the pre-eminence of the symbol over the icon and the index.

In theatre, the extensive use of symbols and indices is inherent due to its nature, and words persist as the most effective means of communication. We learn, think, and act through the word-action. Cinema, as a ductile medium of artistic expression, is not obligated to make extensive use of icons, although audiences and film crews often expect otherwise.

The symbol stands out among signs, as words are the final judges of meaning; France has not forgotten Zola's "I accuse" (J'accuse) in an era where bureaucracy prevails. Icons are equally important; just remember the silhouette of the minstrels and death at the end of *The Seventh Seal* (1957) by Ingmar Bergman, and they enjoy as much trust as symbols. In this film, the symbolism of death playing chess with the knight is a powerful visual metaphor that requires no words to convey its message about the inevitable mortality of humans and the search for meaning in life.

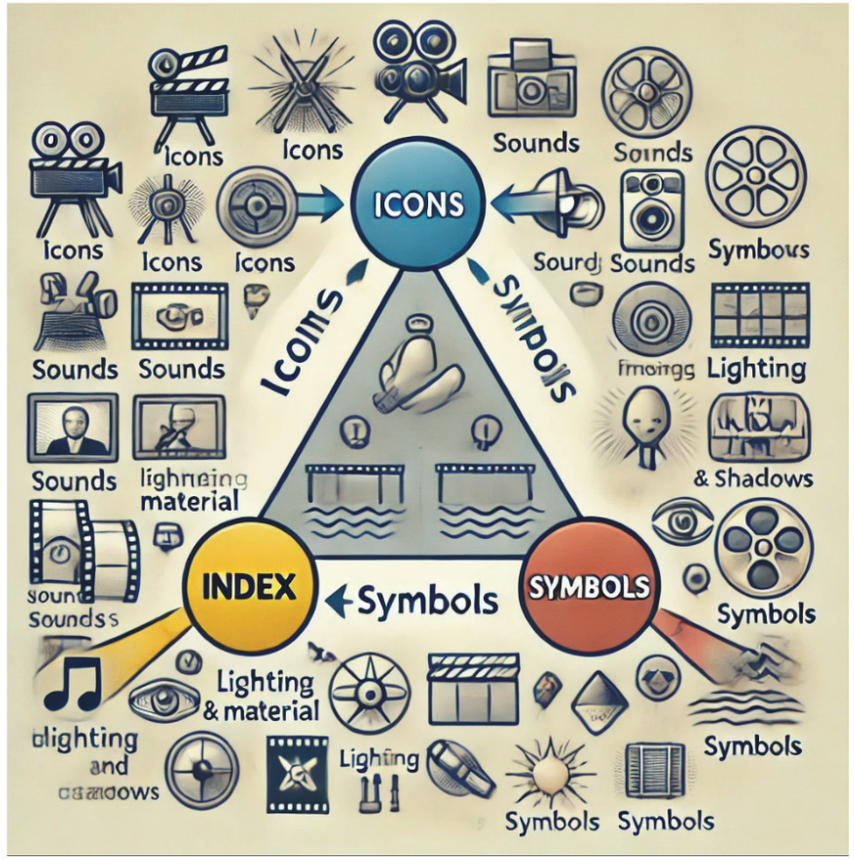
Bergman's poetry manifests in both his images and his symbolic use of cinematic language. The danse macabre at the end of *The Seventh Seal*, where Death leads a procession of souls, is an iconic representation that has endured in the memory of cinema. This type of visual symbolism complements the dialogues and performances that explore existential themes. Indices, on the other hand, are the most volatile signs, though often the most ingenious, as seen in Chaplin's *A Woman of Paris*.

Silent films are the exclusive domain of the icon, while radio is the exclusive domain of the symbol. The index has also had brief stellar moments in cinema history, first in avant-garde films of the 1920s and later in the 1960s and 1970s with video art. This hierarchy collapses in practice, and we can only conclude that particular meanings can be conveyed by icons, indices, or symbols.

Semiotic adaptation is the process of changing particular expressions of meaning from one type of sign to another. Eisenstein's montage of attractions is an admirable effort

88 Pirandello, Luigi, L'azione parlata, in Dal Marzocco, 7 maggio 1899.

to incorporate visual metaphors into cinema, but the almost one-dimensional nature of the icon makes this process difficult. The problem lies not in the emission of the message, but in its reception by an audience conditioned by a cinema that nails them to their seats.



As a film professor, I have often encountered students frustrated by the production costs of their scripts. Thus, in the making of *Kennedy's Crimes* (2012), I made extensive use of symbols as an example for them. Emulating the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, I used words to describe all the violent scenes depicting the violence in Colombia, the most violent nation of the 21st century, offstage.

My main advice for novice filmmakers is to use indices or symbols instead of icons. As a colophon, I will mention a scene in the offices of one of Colombia's most prestigious production companies, the same one that produced the renowned series *Narcos* distributed by Netflix. The executives were engrossed with the costs of a scene in a script that demanded the explosion of a mansion. Then, one of my students, sent there as an intern from the province of Bucaramanga, timidly raised her hand and said before her

astonished superiors:

"Why don't we use an index of the explosion instead of an icon?"

The scene that followed was the explanation of the theory you, dear reader, have read in this chapter.

12. Resourceful AI Cinema

Scenarios are versatile settings in the mind that can be replaced at will. For space, as Kant points out, precedes experience. Before we hear a conversation, a scenario pre-exists in our mind. We assume that such an event should have happened somewhere. The deservedly celebrated request of Peter Brook: “Give me an empty space, and I have a stage," is unnecessary, for any given character requires his/her own space. Of all artistic expressions, comics, I believe, illustrate this precondition best. The speech balloon combines thought with space, the abstract and the concrete, where words exist in space. In a comic's book, readers are not only absorbed by the visual continuity of the drawings but also by the modulations of the conflicts and the characters' decisions.

In an effort to dissociate theatre from film, Grotowski emulates Brecht when he turns spectators into characters: “Since our theatre consists only of actors and audience, we make special demands on both parties." The Polish director advocated a theatre where actors and spectators could communicate with each other. His boldness gave freshness and vitality to theatre, an art able to provide effective communication between players and viewers. The digital era extended such privilege to cinema. As the most expensive premières of opera and theatre are simultaneously screened in cinemas around the globe, we may reasonably expect the birth of virtual theatre groups, troupes of jesters, and players offering immediate feedback to their viewers.

Grotowski's work is also a denunciation of the dissipation of dramatic arts. His celebrated performances with semi-naked players proved to consumers the vanity and shallowness of props and sets. The uniqueness of his work was universally praised, the academy rejoiced with the legacy of his writings, and the innovative output of his theories was quietly absorbed or dismissed by the vanguard expressions of theatre, now in disarray by the digital revolution of filmmaking. Thus, Poor Theatre was unable to trespass the fortresses of mainstream cinema. Film, after all, was the supreme orchid protected by the golden walls of Hollywood. The guardians of the richest of all arts could hardly sympathize with the semantics of a beggar and a jester, a man who shamelessly spoke of poverty before the glamorous halls of the wealthy. Besides, Grotowski was a communist with no apparent interest in cinema. By underlying the aesthetics of poverty, Grotowski deepened the gap between theatre and film for more than three decades.

The art of filmmaking, first developed by clowns, magicians, and vaudeville entrepreneurs, was the art of spectacle from its very inception, as Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno painfully understood in 1944. Commercial films were expected to have a special appeal to vanity. After all, they were the mirror of vice and virtue, the windows of fashion, the teachers of manners, and the models of behaviour. Realistic cinema portraying the living conditions of the majority was ignored or suppressed for the sake of the commonwealth. The stylistic revolts unleashed by works such as Victor Hugo's “Hernani” or Ibsen's “A Doll's House” found an echo in Italian neorealism, and then in the French New Wave, to be classified as exceptional movements. If a woman objected that the social reflection on the mirror of the screen was distorted, she was told,

following the Aristotelian discourse, that such films mustn't represent life as it was but as it should be. The unfit, after all, were free to see her discontent reflected in the wrath of the villain, the criminal, and the mad.

The representation of an action gang of midgets, human torsos, and dwarves taking revenge against the healthy in Tim Browning's *Freaks* (1932) was unbearable for a society unable to sympathize with the untouchables. The 19th-century freak show was immediately replaced by the special effects of the season. Frankenstein, the Monster of the Lagoon, and the Wolfman could be as disturbing as a freak, but they were also evil, and as such, they must always be destroyed. Magic, stunts, and variety shows had been initially adopted by the aesthetics of silent cinema. Buster Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.* (1924) staged crimes and acrobatic persecutions in a melodramatic dreamy world. Keaton's comedic approach to crime was taken up seriously by the film noir aesthetic, a movement closer to German Expressionism than slapstick comedy. Keaton's dreamy world became a world of nightmares in the hands of a new generation of American directors. Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) stages the disintegration of a man's world in a society that never forgives treason.

Spielberg's *The Adventures of Tintin* (2011) is the tedious expression of a Cinema of endless persecutions overseas and cities. With the introduction of 3-D and IMAX, spectators become eagles. Adaptations of comic books have been influenced by the aesthetics of silent cinema as well. Whedon's *The Avengers* (2012) makes a concession to the genre of superhero films by mixing terror with comedy. Hollow dialogues—which are, nonetheless, ingenious—several epic battles in a shattered New York, a Deus ex Machina, and the resurrection of Loki, the antagonist that destroys the Earth, the film displays the latest audio-visual effects, a step that has made cinema the herald of technology. Most cinemagoers of mainstream filmmaking expect, in fact, the same kind of emotions experienced by the passengers of a roller coaster.

Aesthetic theory, greatly influenced by Aristotle's Poetics, has absorbed the political assumptions of mainstream filmmaking at their entire value. After all, producers, actors, journalists, and directors are members of a noble cast diversified in several courts. The social criticism of *Bicycle Thieves* (Ladri di biciclette, 1948) was welcomed and shelved in the vaults of cinema history, as had already happened with *Citizen Kane,* a decadent and shameful portrait of the American Dream. Europe, after all, still takes care of the unemployed. As for the developing world, it still can produce realistic and entertaining films during times of economic crises, as it has happened in Argentina, Mexico and Brazil.

Even Gilles Deleuze recoiled before this thorny issue, leaving testimony of his unwillingness to discuss the production of films in a milieu conditioned by profit. Waste also imports the annihilation of the competition, for any film without car explosions, lavish sets, or celebrities that don't wear Armani suits is just dismissed as unprofessional.

The aesthetics of Resourceful Cinema are the original aesthetics of filmmaking. Resourcefulness was at its cradle when the Lumière brothers shot their first films on whatever was in sight. Actors were friends and passers-by, and plots were improvised under the sun. Unfortunately, the Lumière brothers appeared to have not been very fond of theatre, and the development of the new art was left in the hands of showmen and magicians.

Glauber Rocha and Dogma 95 also tried to reform the aesthetics of cinema. However, the financial demands of film production and distribution limitations truncated its universal aspirations. The luckiest ones joined the establishment, as happened with Lars von Trier. The film rebels were congratulated and rewarded, while academics took due note of their contributions.

Eventually, some invaders infiltrated the lofty fortresses of cinema, now crumbled by the commercialization of consumer digital video, the low cost and lightness of digital camcorders, their high-quality images, and versatility. The main cause of this revolution was the struggle for a voice in the concert of public opinion; its main aftermath was the free global immediate distribution of their films via network streaming.

The war took place for several years in the fields of photography and lighting. Video presented its advantages with low production costs (*El Mariachi*) and documentary-style cinematography (*The Blair Witch Project*). Film reaffirmed its superiority by the sharpness of its image, the professionalism of its craft, and the fame of directors and celebrities. Once consumer camcorders and photographic devices achieved an impressive level of broadcasting quality, the establishment shifted the discourse of its supremacy to the costs of production. Every year, we are flooded with ads announcing the most expensive film ever made or sold. The freak show of the 19th century has been replaced by the luxurious set, and art directors are enlisted from the ghettos of graphic designers, tailors, decorators, and painters.

With the development of cellular phones, digital video cameras became a component of public life. As Kodak was going into bankruptcy, the digital image confines the rolls of celluloid to the walls of museums and film clubs.

The democratization of the Internet has in fact ended the dispute in amicable terms. Though film preserves its celebrities and craft, video makers and filmmakers produce films that are uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo for worldwide distribution.

Resourceful films are first watched with distrust; their aesthetics certainly violate old established filmmaking practices. But they also gain acceptance as new visions of reality. As any work of art, they absorb the chaos we live in order to render artistic harmony, thus planting the seeds of that personal universal experience that is independent cinema.

The fall of Hollywood's dominance and the rise of Auteur cinema have changed the landscape. In 1995, soon after I started my MFA in Film and Media Arts, I understood that the democratization of filmmaking was at hand. The challenges ahead were still a hindrance. The costs of production, developing, and distribution were just too high for independent filmmakers. Unless you had a friend or contact in the industry, you had to rely entirely on fortune. Most classmates used to shoot their documentaries on video, in the hope of getting screened at a film & video festival. But the texture of analogue consumer video cameras was still very deficient. Dropouts and visual noise were the norm; it was very hard to cross the boundary of professional video. Most video projects produced before the 1990s were smashed against the pillar rocks of mainstream cinema and broadcasting.

The advent of digital cinema turned the tables around. Though many filmmakers expressed doubts about the qualities of digital cinema, there was a growing sense of

change. The development of digital technology started addressing some of these challenges, making production more accessible. However, the costs and limitations persisted in various forms.

From my early youth, I read Grotowski's writings on poor theatre. Working with non-professional actors, we managed to produce four non-budget theatre plays in Colombia between 1992 and 1994. Pavis' writings on theatre, Deleuze's studies on cinema, and Zeami's thoughts on acting persuaded me of the symbolic nature of representation. During my years at Temple University, I watched and analysed in detail the greatest films of 20th-century cinema.

The economy, versatility, and depth of the films by Dreyer, Welles, and Buñuel were my points of reference for my first ambitious project: *Hamlet Unbound* (2012), an iconoclastic adaptation of the great Shakespearean tragedy. During my late 20s I lived in its beautiful streets, and like Hamlet, I confronted the pangs of despised love, the law's delay, the insolence of office, and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes. I observed the city and its people for four years, having arrived with nascent English skills. I was mocked by the Saint Joseph's University theatre group, whose members despised me for my stuttering English. However, I was not afraid to make a fool of himself as I was walking on the stage I had always dreamed of: the one that all of them, without recognizing it, had inherited from the company that Prince Hamlet hired in the suburbs of London at the end of the 16th century.

I experienced being lost with almost no money in derelict neighbourhoods, but I also found refuge in public libraries where I discovered the beauty of Milton and Franklin, the verses of Sylvia Plath, and the novels of Upton Sinclair. My greatest love blossomed in its suburbs, and I wept for its loss under the harshness of winter, coming close to losing my mind like Ophelia. However, poetry saved me, along with my steadfast faith in God, the same faith that saved Wittgenstein from suicide. Often, I found the thread of Ariadne in its metro galleries. Gathering all the credit the system offered me, I financed my own production of *Hamlet* with $20,000, which eventually led to the loss of everything I had.

We began production in the middle of winter 1997 and continued until August 1998, when I was offered a teaching position at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa. The precarious condition of digital technology and the extensive research required for this treatise delayed post-production for more than a decade. I recall many sleepless nights in the editing room of the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, painstakingly cutting my film on a low-memory computer, progressing very slowly. One night, some professors entered and discovered me working. They asked about my wife: “How can you leave her alone during Holy Week?” She eventually divorced me.

In 2005, I was offered a teaching position at the Faculty of Audio-visual Arts at the Autonomous University of Bucaramanga. The challenge posed by the Dean of the emerging program was considerable. I was asked to teach students how to produce and direct 24-minute films in a city without a film or TV industry. There was not a single professional theatre group in town, and the only significant artistic events were an annual Piano Festival and a storytelling event.

Eventually, after several years of teaching and research, I produced and directed *Kennedy's Crimes* (2011), a feature film based on my homonymous theatre play. Against

all odds, the film was shot in four days with the help of four students and a budget of $4,000. Neo-colonialism is a heavy burden I experienced on my second feature film. While in *Hamlet Unbound*, actors had faith in my work and gave their all regardless of their fees, in Bucaramanga, most actors did not believe the project would be finished, largely due to the discouragement from my jealous colleagues who worked behind the scenes, telling them that nobody could make a film in only four days. In the end, many actors did not learn their lines by heart, so we had to cut pieces of paper and ask them to read them. Even so, *Kennedy's Crimes* was finished, and I did its editing in India, with the help of Master Isaac Francis.

I have also managed to produce three feature-length documentary films: *Manatí*, *Portrait of a 3rd-World Happy Town*, *Love According to the Poets*, and *The Seize*. These films were all created with no budget, and I avoided all investment in marketing. I also chose not to participate in film festivals, trusting their distribution to YouTube. Even though Hamlet's monologue "Ser o no Ser" has garnered 25,000 views, the film hasn't received significant recognition yet.

My merit—and I have learned this from Schopenhauer—, which will come in due time, lies in having applied the theories of this book to such films and to other short films I have made, such as *Po* (1996), *Witches Night* (2009), and *A Shortcut to India* (2012). Now, however, technology is coming to support my work in an unprecedented way. All the films I have made, applying my theories about ingenious cinema, come to light with refined images and pristine sound. Without them, I wouldn't possess such a great understanding of the intricacies of filmmaking, an understanding that you, my dear reader, have encountered in this book. For these pages are but a compilation of the theory I have developed in these fields.

AI-generated video images are about to revolutionize the filmmaking process. The obstacles that once hindered my projects are being overcome by AI cinematic output.

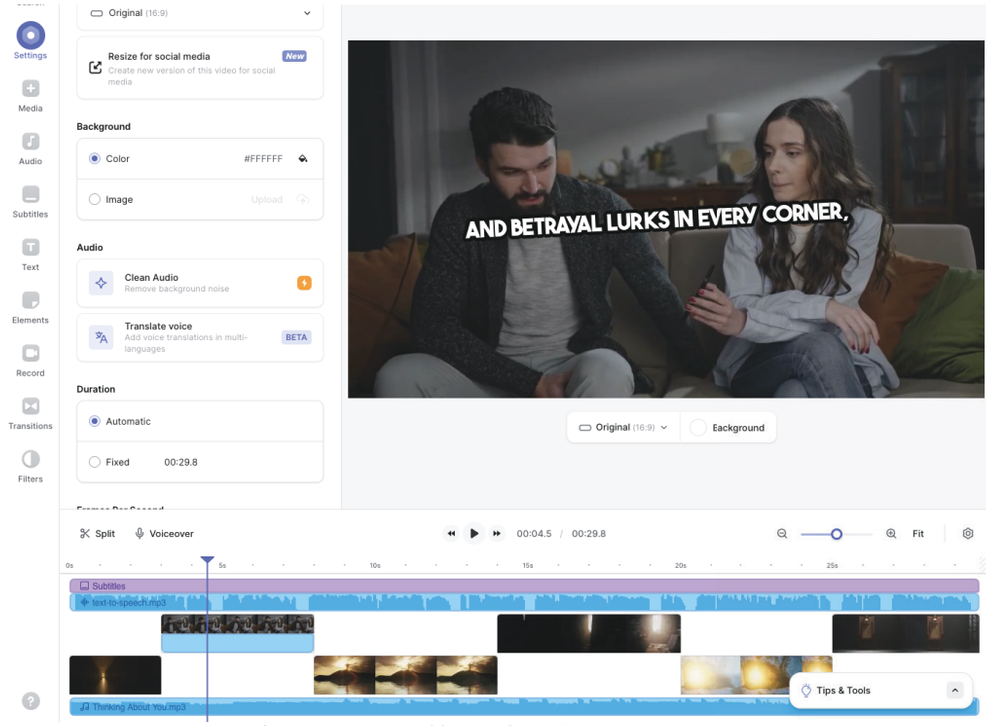
AI can now create high-quality imagery, reducing the need for expensive sets, costumes, and extensive post-production work. With AI, filmmakers can generate detailed and visually stunning scenes without the need for large budgets or extensive crews. The essence is great plots and the basics are good dialogues. How to get them? Imagine a good story, such as the plot of my theatre play *The Loot: Dead Bird Flies High*, and put some characters to live it in a single house, with all remembrances bringing you to previous scenarios:

> “"Samuel has been murdered. His wife, Lola, is about to inherit his vast estate, " Ivyheart." But, in a twist of fate, Doña Norma, his mother-in-law, accuses Lola of conspiring with her lover, Guillermo , to drown Samuel.
>
> Desperate to silence her accuser, Lola agrees to "give up" her inheritance to Doña Norma for one million dollars in cash. The meeting is scheduled for a Saturday night, in the shadowy hallways of "Ivyheart." The origin of money? Questionable at best.
>
> When the clock strikes midnight, the transaction is unexpectedly interrupted by Samuel himself, who claims to have been resurrected. Lola and

Guillermo dismiss it as a ghostly illusion, until Samuel presents irrefutable evidence. Even his loyal dog, Cayman, recognizes him.

Samuel's resurrection is not just a return from the grave. He is here to prevent an injustice, driving Lola and Guillermo to the brink of madness. His terror intensifies when ancient prejudices about greed and revenge arise.

Suspecting a trick by Doña Norma, Lola and Guillermo hatch a desperate plan to eliminate Samuel once again. But this time, the resurrected Samuel is ready for them..."



Sequence of images generated by AI about THE LOOT: DEAD BIRD FLIES HIGH

AI's capability to produce lifelike imagery allows independent filmmakers to focus on storytelling and acting, the core of cinema.

The principle of individuation dissolves in the presence of a sincere film. Many cinematic scenes move us to the core because we intuitively understand that the heart of humanity is at stake, and that heart is our own. One of the most enduring satisfactions of being simultaneously a writer, an actor, a film director, and a cinema professor is revealing the emotions of film to the common folk and the poets of tomorrow. I vividly recall presenting Ionesco's *The Lesson* to an audience captivated by our performances in Bogotá in 1993; a class in Madras, India, where I screened *Angst essen Seele auf* (Fassbinder,

1974) in 2011 to 50 scandalized male students and two delighted female filmmakers; and another in Hyderabad in 2012, where, in a single day, I directed and acted the final five scenes of a film being sabotaged without success by some rivals: *God's Loop* (2014).

Film theory has certainly contributed to my understanding of the essential aspects of filmmaking. Films are, in general, products of the creative mind. They are artistic constructions conditioned by culture, home and the receptacle of our imagination. They convey a dramatic representation, but above all our human essence, art that bears fruit from our relationship with other cultures.

"Give me an actor and I'll make you a film," is the motto of Grotowski, later on adopted by Peter Brook, which I now apply to Resourceful Cinema as "give me a good plot and I will give you a great film." As conflict is the essence of screenwriting, acting has proved to be the essence of filmmaking. We don't need to see characters in new colourful clothes to understand their passions. Once we accept acting as the core of cinema, we'll see lavish sets and costumes as what they really are: decoration.

In my book "Acting Express[89]" I go into detail, for actors, the secrets of acting that I have compiled in my travels through such diverse cultures and languages of the world in eleven cities in nine nations on five continents.

Before the coming of AI cinema, fashion identified luxurious homes with dwellings, dresses with characters, and beds with buildings. The truth we learned from saints is that any man can live the same in a shared room, a small studio, or a mansion. We can even make the world our home, as Barbarians did—according to Tacitus. But if mainstream filmmaking has educated our eyes in the sets of the rich and powerful, let them be in the times of AI cinema. The castles and mansions that the mystic Emmanuel Swedenborg saw in heaven as the houses of the fair and honest, are now at the disposal of any auteur with imagination. All that is needed is a computer and access to the internet.

The practices of Resourceful Cinema are mostly felt in the output of indie films, independent cinema, and mumblecore cineastes. As the work of resourceful filmmakers threatens the establishment, Hollywood, Paris, and Mumbai are keen to support new promising directors. Duplass & Duplass' *Cyrus* (2010) is a portrait of the loneliness and eagerness for love in modern America. Structured as a romantic comedy, the film portrays the struggle between John, a divorcee in his late 40s who has fallen in love with Molly, and Cyrus, a 21-year-old man who maintains an Oedipal relationship with his mother, Molly. The directors wisely unfold the story from John's viewpoint, who appears for some moments to assume the fate of Sophocles' Laius.

And the tide of intelligent, resourceful filmmakers from all around the world are at the brink of global success. Moreover, resourceful AI films are ubiquitous; they can be produced with meagre means. They can also get worldwide distribution on the Internet. The politics of hunger and third-world exclusion exposed by Glauber Rocha are healed by the surplus of the digital era. Breath-taking scenarios, costumes, and decors are worked out by AI software programs. Visuals certainly please the eye and ease the mind;

[89] Santander Ferreira, Hugo Noël (2024). Acting Express. Stanley.

the scope of their therapeutic effects can be measured by holidaymakers' preference for exotic locations. Clothes and settings are luxuries that can be created at will as well.

The legacy of mainstream filmmaking is justified by the immersion of AI into fashion. At the same time, pretentious cinema that disregards conflict and dismisses plot as a cultural invention is in decline. Cinema is an illusion that takes form in the mind of the spectator through mechanisms of perception, and the arts of screenwriting and editing must be adapted to the aesthetic of compelling stories.

Psychology intervenes in the process, as Joseph Campbell had already pointed out. The archetypes of the inner world, embodied in the mythical figures of religion, find their contemporary avatars in the heroes and villains of digital filmmaking. Cinema revitalizes and produces myths. The deeds of the Ramayana and The Bible are emulated by the heroes of *Star Wars* and the kingdoms of *The Matrix*. Slavoj Zizek tackles this same issue from a different approach. His readings of Marx and Lacan are richly exemplified by the social imaginary of cinema, and *Psycho* is presented as an articulation of the psychoanalytical triad: the ego, the superego, and the id.

With the advent of AI-generated images, the landscape of filmmaking has fundamentally changed. AI has become the ultimate tool for overcoming the obstacles that once plagued independent filmmakers. By leveraging AI, I can now produce high-quality images without the need for expensive equipment, large teams, or extensive post-production resources. AI can generate detailed and realistic scenes and characters, reducing the dependence on physical sets and costumes. This technological advancement allows filmmakers to focus more on storytelling and the art of narration.

The ability of AI to produce cinematic-quality images democratizes access to high production values, enabling any filmmaker to create visually stunning content. This innovation not only solves the problem of production costs but also opens new avenues for creativity and experimentation. AI-generated video images allow me to bring my visions to life in ways that were previously unimaginable. I can cite my documentary *Love at First Sight* (2024), whose first cut was rejected by a high-born writer from Bogotá outside Colombia (since in Colombia, high-born writers are film judges), arguing that "some images do not have the quality of a high-end cell phone." These images were replaced to meet his undeserved but socially imposed requirement.

Additionally, AI can assist in editing, special effects, and even scriptwriting, simplifying the entire filmmaking process. This technological advancement ensures that independent filmmakers can compete with commercial productions in terms of visual and narrative quality.

The obstacles that once hindered Auteur projects have been significantly mitigated by AI technology. The future of filmmaking is now democratized, accessible, and innovative, allowing storytellers to create and distribute their work with unprecedented ease and efficiency.

The marriage of technology and auteur creativity heralds a new era in cinema, where the barriers of the past and their stylistic impositions are not only replaced but used to the advantage of genuine filmmakers.

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